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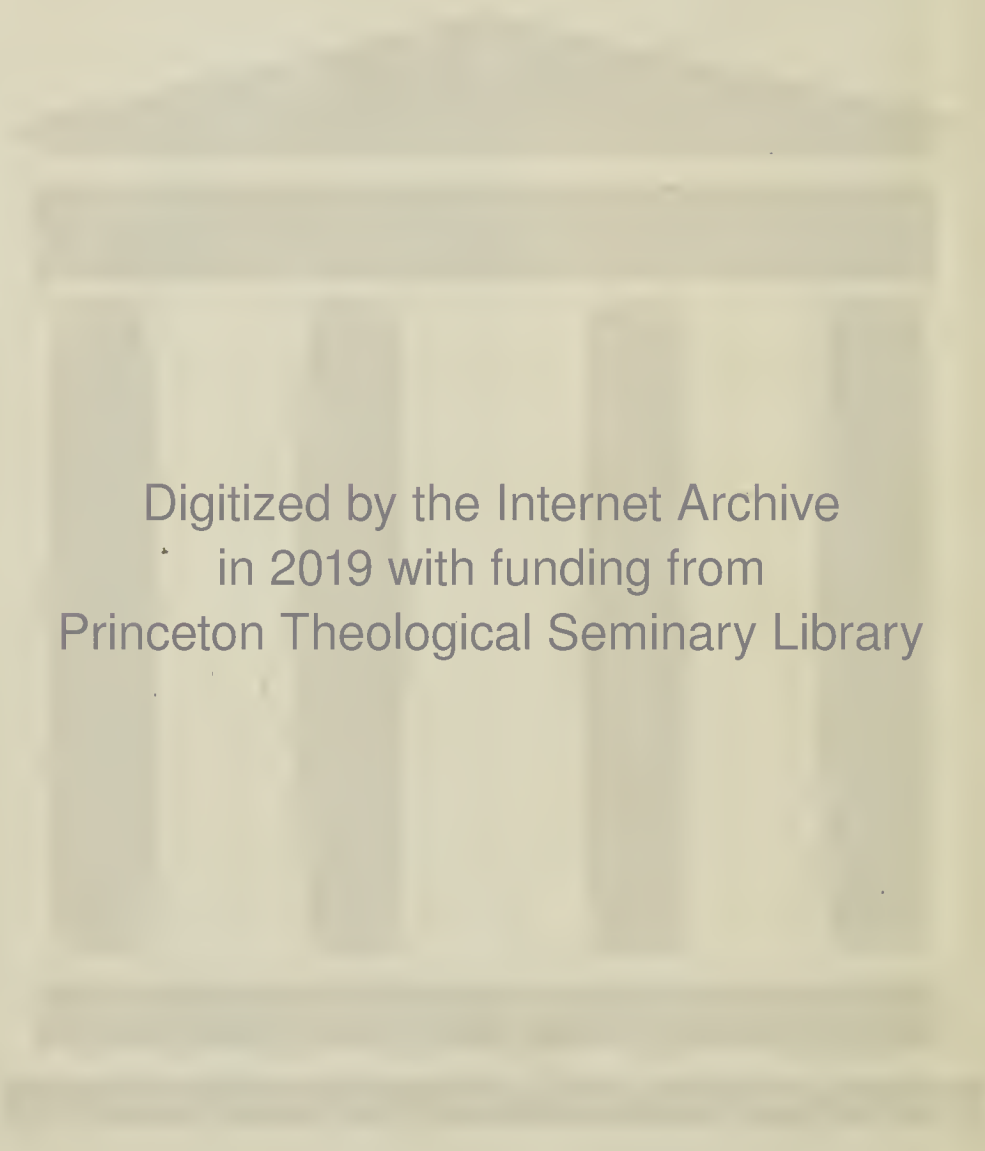

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MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY;

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT;

AND THE

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Printed by Thornton and Collie, 19 St David Street.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY;

THE

NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT;

AND THE

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT;

IN REPLY TO

MR HOWARD HINTON

AND

THE BAPTIST MIDLAND ASSOCIATION.

BY J. A. HALDANE.

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PREFACE.

While the following pages particularly refer to the sentiments of Mr Hinton and the Baptist Midland Association, they are intended to oppose a very numerous class, of which these individuals are only the representatives.

The subjects treated of are highly important. On the right understanding of Man's Responsibility, the Nature and Extent of the Atonement, and the Work of the Holy Spirit, depends our advancement in the divine life.

Instead of being entirely guided by the scriptures, and receiving the kingdom of God as little children, men are constantly prone to lean to their own understanding, and to attempt to reduce "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom," to the level of their own conceptions. They forget that, although every revelation from God must have commended itself to the mind of man while he retained the Divine image, a new element has intervened

between the fallen creature and his Creator. Hence he is placed in circumstances which render his natural faculties totally inadequate to enable him to appreciate the manifold wisdom of God in the amazing plan of man's recovery.

Guilty and polluted as he is, he can only receive the love of the truth by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, communicated through the all-perfect atonement offered upon Calvary. He who moved upon the face of the waters, and reduced the natural creation to order and beauty, is alone able to dispel the darkness in which sinful man is plunged, and to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is an important part of the faith once delivered to the saints, for which we are commanded earnestly to contend. The Apostle having represented the world as crucified unto him, and he unto the world, adds: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God," Gal. vi. 15, 16. Not only is the oft-repeated doctrine of the necessity of the new creation of fallen man here asserted, but the faith of it is represented as the test of our belonging to the Israel of God.

From time to time the Lord sends a plentiful rain to refresh his weary heritage in this land of drought.

At the period of the Reformation, the Spirit was copiously poured out, and the consequent depth and accuracy of the views of many eminent men in those days are astonishing, considering the gross darkness in which the world had for centuries been plunged.

Being dead, they still speak in their writings, which have been very useful in directing men's attention to the infallible standard of truth. At present, however, there are symptoms in various quarters of a strong disposition to soften down the doctrines of the Word of God, and to render religion popular, by attempting to assimilate the wisdom of God to the wisdom of the world.

In the following pages, the Author has endeavoured to lift up a protest against sentiments that appear to be gaining ground, which at once disparage the Sovereignty of God the Father, depreciate the perfection of the Sacrifice of the Son, and eclipse the Glory of the Holy Spirit. He would commend what he has written to His blessing whose cause it is intended to promote; and, he trusts, that it may be instrumental in leading some to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and to walk therein, that they may find rest to their souls.

EDINBURGH, December, 1841.

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MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

Man's responsibility indelibly impressed upon his mind;—the evil of employing metaphysical reasoning to illustrate the Gospel, and of attempting to prove what is self-evident.

For many years Mr Hinton has been attempting to introduce a system of doctrine very opposite to that contained in the Word of God. This system is developed in his volume on "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion," and more recently in a Treatise upon Man's Responsibility. Upon the latter subject we have no controversy with our author, but we strongly object to the line of argument by which he endeavours to establish this fundamental truth.

That man is responsible is not only plainly inculcated in the scriptures of truth, but is indelibly impressed upon the mind of every individual. In order to palliate their guilt, men may disclaim responsibility, but their heart condemns them. A man can no more divest himself of the conviction of responsibility than of the feeling of pain. This conviction will never be increased by any process of metaphysical reasoning, any more than the acuteness of our sensations will be increased by the study of anatomy. Our author, however, thinks otherwise, and having

delivered a series of discourses on the dominion of God, and, afterwards, a lecture to Socialists, he "resolved on treating the subject generally, and on encountering as much the erroneous theologist as the sceptic or the infidel." In his preface, he says:—

"I do not know that it is a common thing to try to prove the justice of man's responsibility. It is more usual, I think, on the one hand, to assert it on the authority of the scriptures, and, on the other, to rely on the belief of it which is so readily imbibed and so tenaciously held by the human mind. To one who might inquire whether he was responsible, and how it could be shown, the more frequent reply would be, perhaps, 'The bible declares you are so; and besides, you know it yourself, because your conscience tells you so.' I suspect the time is come, however, which calls for a different answer to this question. Unhappily, the very name of the bible is made by many an occasion of ridicule, and old habits of thought are becoming as powerless over men as the withy bands and hempen cords which for a moment bound the limbs of Sampson; religious truths, under the nickname of priestly dogmas, are trampled in the dust, while the teachers of religion are challenged to the exercise of reason, and dragged to the bar of common sense. I do not say that this challenge is always fair; but it is always plausible, and to a certain extent it is just."—Pp. vii. viii.

It is one of the characteristics of the latter days that men should be "heady and high-minded," but, indeed, ever since the first promulgation of the gospel, human wisdom has been arrayed against it, and no wonder, for it is the avowed pur-

pose of the gospel to make "foolish the wisdom of this world." Believers are cautioned against being spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, from the example of those who did not glorify God, by being implicitly guided by the revelation with which they were favoured, and who, in consequence, became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things;" Rom i. 22, 23. Thus did their wisdom issue in the grossest idolatry, and thus, in every age, have men corrupted the gospel of Christ.

We have ample experience of the imperfection of human reason, and of its liability to err, even in natural things. Are, then, the deep things of God more within the reach of our boasted wisdom than the things of the natural world; or are these the only things in regard to which our reason cannot err? God is indeed the Author of *right* reason, and cannot be the Author of what is really contrary to it. While man retained the divine image in which he was created, his reason was uncorrupted. But which of our fallen race is so complete a master of *right* reason as to know infallibly what is agreeable and what is contrary to it? There is no safety for fallen man but in the knowledge of his own ignorance, and in dependance on God for the wisdom which cometh from above. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil;" Prov. iii. 5—7.

Religion has of late become fashionable, and—like "the whole duty of man," in a work formerly so popular,—is "made easy for the practice of the present day." While it is attended with a considerable degree of bustle and excitement, attendance upon meetings of societies and committees, there is reason to fear that comparatively few feel the importance of being valiant for the truth, and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Liberalism is the boast of the age in which we live, and hence we are laid under a strong temptation to mould the religion of Jesus to the prevailing taste, to divest it, in a great measure, of mystery, to strip it of all that is repulsive to carnal reason, and thus to get rid of the offence of the cross.

But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The gospel remains unchanged amidst all the fluctuations of human opinion; it does not accommodate itself to the march of intellect, or to the progress of society, nor does it borrow its hue from the complexion of the age.

When we find an author employing metaphysical reasoning to illustrate the doctrine of the gospel, we may rest assured he is endeavouring to blend materials which will never coalesce. Nothing tends more to gratify the natural vanity of the mind than plunging into abstruse speculations; but these are directly opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus. We can only receive his salvation by our high imaginations being cast down; consequently, all our attempts to reconcile the wisdom of God with the wisdom of

this world must necessarily issue in disappointment. It only encourages a disposition, to which we are sufficiently prone, to sit in judgment upon the revelation which God has promulgated, instead of humbly and reverently taking our place at the feet of Jesus, and listening to him who is perfect in wisdom.

In regard to human responsibility, our wisest course is to appeal to the innumerable declarations of scripture, in which it is clearly asserted, while it is confirmed by every man's consciousness. And such, after all, is the course to which our author is compelled to resort. In replying to "both philosophers and divines," who "tell us that man is not an agent, but a machine," Mr Hinton, after some observations on the constitution of the human mind, proceeds: "I confirm this conclusion by an appeal to our own consciousness, a kind of evidence which is clearly appropriate, since the matter to be ascertained is the manner of our own action, and which ought to be satisfactory, since it is the most direct evidence that exists, not excepting the evidence of the senses."—Pp.14, 15. If, then, we have upon this subject "the most direct evidence that exists, not excepting the evidence of the senses," why should we enter into speculations which can only tend to perplex us, because they proceed upon the supposition that the evidence of our senses is insufficient?

Were a man who possesses the faculty of sight to maintain that the sun does not shine at noon-day, it would be absurd to attempt to convince him by argument. We should justly conclude, either that he was insane, or that he was asserting what he knew to be false. Now since, according to our author, conscious-

ness is even more direct evidence than that of the senses, why should we spend our time in arguing with those who deem such evidence unsatisfactory? Every attempt to prove what is self-evident is worse than useless. There are first truths, or first principles, which do not admit of proof, and such is the truth, that the work of the law is written in the heart of man. Hence our intuitive knowledge of right and wrong, and our sense of responsibility, of which no man can possibly divest himself.

It is, by no means, our intention to follow Mr Hinton through all his speculations. This would lead us into the same error into which he has fallen. But, in the course of his reasoning, he has given an erroneous view of various passages of the Word of God, to which we shall advert, and shall likewise endeavour to prove that his system does not give a just representation of the state of fallen man, and of the way of recovery.

CHAPTER I.

Mr Hinton admits the inconclusiveness of his own reasoning.

Before entering upon the consideration of our author's system, we may observe, that he seems fully aware that his attempt to establish the responsibility of man, by the train of reasoning which he has pursued, has proved a failure. Indeed, he admits that it is incapable of demonstration. He maintains that we are not called upon to reason out the fundamental truths of religion. "We derive them," he tells us, "from the oracles of God, and rest on them with satisfaction, because they agree with our experience."—P. 103. The unavoidable conclusion appears to be, that in his disquisition on man's responsibility, he has been speaking "into the air." But let Mr Hinton answer for himself:—"It may have been surprising to them (his readers) to find a truth, which they may have deemed as simple and evident as it is fundamental, somewhat difficult of convincing demonstration, and mixed up with abstruse speculations. Is all this needful, perhaps they have exclaimed, in order to be assured of the foundations of religious truth? Let me be permitted, in one word, to say to such readers, that, in all cases, the simplest truths are the most difficult of demonstration. Things may be abundantly plain in fact, which, nevertheless, if any one challenges you to the effort, it is by no means easy to prove. Nothing can be more evident, for example, than our own existence, and the existence of the objects which surround us; yet to prove

these facts by reasoning is a matter of extreme difficulty, even if it be possible at all. The truth is, that an argument always requires premises, something admitted, out of which to construct your proof. It arises from this circumstance, that the simpler the truths are about which you reason, the more difficult reasoning becomes; there being in this case fewer premises, or admitted points, from which you can argue. Reasoning is capable of being always pushed back into difficulties, by taking the elements assumed in every argument, and challenging the proof of them. And as, in such a process, we should come gradually to truths so simple that the proof of them is difficult, so we should come at length to what are called ultimate truths, or truths beyond which we cannot go, and of which it is a hard matter to find any proof at all, except that they demonstrate themselves to our perception. These must be assumed as facts without reasoning, because they agree with our perceptions and experience. Of this class in physical philosophy is the doctrine of the existence of the material universe, which, although no one by reasoning can prove it, no one ever doubted. Of the same class in metaphysical philosophy is the doctrine of a creature's free-agency, which, also, if nobody can demonstrate it, everybody acts upon. The truth last mentioned is one which we have had to do with in the preceding pages; not voluntarily, however, mixing up plain matters with profound, but because our opponents constrain us to follow them where they go. I hope I have successfully shown that these abstruse speculations afford them no refuge

from the demands of their Maker; but I wish also to satisfy readers who may be little conversant with them, that the difficulties which attach to the ultimate truths of religion, attach to them in common with all ultimate truths, in every department of human knowledge. Our fundamental notions (and these comprehend all the most important opinions we hold) are held in all cases, not by reasoning, but by perception and experience. And as it is with natural knowledge, just so it is with religious knowledge. We are not called upon to reason out its fundamental doctrines. We derive them from the oracles of God, and rest on them with satisfaction, because they agree with our experience. We are justified and happy in doing so; nor is there any thing in the abstruse speculations into which some perverse disputers will both rush themselves, and drive the advocates of religious truth, which need for a moment disturb our repose."—Pp. 101–3.

It is here admitted that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prove, by reasoning, our own existence, and no one, we are told, can, by reasoning, prove the existence of the material universe. "It is no new thing in metaphysical philosophy for reasoning to be at once apparently conclusive and demonstrably false; that is to say, metaphysical reasoners have sometimes come to a palpably false conclusion, without any one being able to detect a flaw in the reasoning by which they have arrived at it. A signal instance of this may be cited in a celebrated prelate, Bishop Berkeley, who is admitted to have proved, beyond the power of argumentative refutation, the non-existence of the material universe;

that there is no such thing as sun or stars, as earth or sea, as the existence of other men or even our own. The fact is, that, in subjects of this class, there are more modes of fallacious argument than the human understanding has been able to detect; and that proof may sometimes be given of the falsity of a conclusion, and, therefore, of the fallacy of an argument, when we are not able to show wherein the fallacy consists."–P. 38. To what purpose, then, does Mr Hinton follow his opponents into the regions of abstruse speculation, while he admits that "our fundamental notions are held in all cases, not by reasoning, but by perception and experience?" If we are not called to reason out the fundamental truths of religion, if we derive them from the oracles of God, and rest on them with satisfaction because they agree with our experience, is it not better to reply to the objections either of avowed infidels or paradoxical divines, by the plain declarations of Scripture, confirmed by our own consciousness, than to quit this vantage ground, and to enter upon a train of abstruse speculations, "where there are more modes of fallacious argument than the human understanding has been able to detect," and where "proof may sometimes be given of the falsity of a conclusion, and, therefore of the fallacy of an argument, when we are not able to show wherein the fallacy consists."

The apostles commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, by manifestation of the truth; they did not allow themselves to be seduced into what they term "vain jangling," but having delivered their message with all faithfulness, affection, and long-suffering, they testified that if their gospel was hid, it was hid to them that are lost.

CHAPTER II.

The gospel intended to pour contempt upon the wisdom of this world;—attempt to divest the gospel of mystery, a frequent source of its corruption;—the truth only learned by the teaching of the Spirit;—the king of Siam;—North American Indian;—moral inability;—spiritual perception.

While the scriptures address men as rational creatures, they inform us that it was God's purpose to stain the pride of all human glory,—to humble the lofty looks of man, and to bow down his haughtiness. Man fell by seeking to attain a greater measure of wisdom than his Maker had seen fit to impart, and he is restored, by ceasing from his own wisdom, by becoming a fool that he may be wise. "Where," it is asked, "is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Again, we are taught, that except we receive the kingdom of God as a little child, we shall not enter therein. The man who possesses most of the temper of a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. A little child is conscious of its own ignorance,—it bows to the wisdom of its parents, and receives upon their testimony, with undoubting confidence, many things which it is unable to comprehend. Indeed, this seems essential to the development of the mental faculties. Were a child to refuse credit to whatever it did not comprehend, it would learn little or nothing. It would resemble those disciples of Des Cartes, who, being determined to take nothing for granted, could

proceed no farther than the conviction of their own existence, and got the name of *egoists*, from the argument upon which this conviction was founded.

The apostle, in reproving the Corinthians for the want of this child-like spirit, says, "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ." Perhaps, like our author, although "not voluntarily mixing up plain truths with profound," they had been constrained by their opponents to follow them where they went, and hoped they had "successfully shown that their abstruse speculations" afforded them "no refuge from the demands of their Maker." All this, however, appeared to the apostle the wisdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, that come to nought, while he spoke of the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, to our glory, 1 Cor. ii. 7.

Mr Hinton admits there are mysteries in the scriptures. It were, indeed, absurd to suppose that a revelation from God should not contain mysteries. The books of nature and providence are full of mystery, arising from our ignorance and our circumstances as fallen creatures. But there is a peculiar reason for the revelation of mercy being in many respects mysterious. In order to hide pride from man, God has, in the plan of salvation, destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent; for he saves them that believe "by the foolishness of preaching." But Mr Hinton, endeavours to get rid of many of the mysteries of the Word of God, by terming them "the mysteries of systematic theology." We are aware that some have been deeply read in "systematic theology," and very zealous in

fending orthodox sentiments, while they have exhibited the doctrines of the gospel in a cold and abstract form, bearing little resemblance to the mode of apostolic teaching. Still, we are somewhat jealous of the sneers which are frequently uttered against systematic theology, because it is frequently, if not uniformly, connected with an attempt to get rid of some of the great truths of the gospel. Every man must have a system, or he is a child tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. What was the form of sound words which the apostle urged Timothy to hold fast, (2 Tim. i. 13) but the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its different parts and relations? The scripture contains a perfect system of divine truth, but from our ignorance, we are very prone to mar its beauty and symmetry.

We read of holding the *mystery* of the faith, 1 Tim. iii. 9.; the *mystery* of Christ, Eph. iii. 4.; the *mystery* of the gospel, Eph. vi. 19. Our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven to treasure *hid* in a field, which, when a man hath found, he *hideth*. He cannot teach his neighbour what he has learned; all the children of the new covenant are taught of God. Flesh and blood have not revealed to them the *mystery* of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Perhaps nothing has tended more to the corruption of the gospel than the attempt to divest it of mystery; and this attempt is frequently made with the view of obviating the objections which the enmity of fallen man against God has in every age prompted him to advance against the truth as it is in Jesus. "Some parts (of the Bible) may be obscure," says our author, "but if other parts be plain, then to this extent it is

available to its professed design."—P. 26. Is this a proper way of speaking of the revelation of the all-wise God? Does it not imply that only to a certain extent it is available to its professed design? Are we not then justified in passing by whatever we may deem obscure? Is this to tremble at the Word of God? Is this sitting at the feet of Jesus, and learning the truth from our divine Teacher?

"I am very willing that what cannot be understood should be passed by, provided what can be understood be pondered and obeyed."—Ib. If so, everything in the gospel must be passed by till men are enlightened in the knowledge of the truth. There are many things in revelation which correspond with men's natural apprehensions; such as the precepts of the moral law,—God's over-ruling providence,—and a judgment to come; but the grand truths of the gospel can only be learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, because they are foolishness to the natural man.

"I have also to say further," Mr Hinton proceeds, "that a proposition is not to be set down as unintelligible, because it contains or asserts what is mysterious. When I say that the grass grows, I assert a mystery, for no one can tell how it grows; but the proposition can be understood, and is understood by every body. When I assert that God was manifest in the flesh—the great mystery of godliness—this proposition is quite as intelligible as the former, and is no less universally understood.

"It certainly is with remarkable heedlessness that the charge I am now noticing is adduced. The truths of religion are in point of fact understood,

even by the very infidel who laughs at them as unintelligible; for, if he does not understand them, why does he laugh at them? Does he in any other case deride what he does not understand? Would he laugh at a sentence in an unknown language, or at English words so arranged as to make no meaning? Undoubtedly not. Then why does he scoff at scriptural declarations, but because he does understand them, and by his understanding of them arrives at the conclusion that they are worthy of ridicule? The measure of understanding of the scriptures which suffices for him to reject the gospel certainly might suffice for embracing it. Propositions not understood can no more be rejected than received, no more ridiculed than revered."—p. 26, 27.

It is true we cannot tell how the grass grows, but that it does grow is obvious to every man's senses. There is nothing in our fallen condition to prevent our acquiring the knowledge of natural things, but even in regard to them, what we are altogether unaccustomed to frequently appears impossible.

In the reign of Louis XIV. an embassy was sent to the king of Siam. Among other things, the ambassador informed the king that in France, during winter, the cold was so intense that men walked upon the water. The king perfectly understood the proposition, but it was so opposed to anything which he had ever seen or heard of, that he considered it as mockery, and threatened the ambassador with instant death. That men should walk upon water was to him a stumbling-block and foolishness. Had he, however, visited a cold country, or seen a piece of ice, the mystery would have been explained.

The government of the United States sometimes

judge it advisable to invite one or two of the chiefs of remote Indian tribes to their capital, and the following is the account given of one of these visits.

A chief belonging to a very distant tribe, came to Washington. The President received him with great kindness; the troops were manœuvred before him; he witnessed the practice of the artillery; and after every department had displayed to him whatever was likely to excite his admiration, he was presented with a colonel's uniform, and permitted to depart. In return for the presents he had received, and with a desire to impart as much information as possible to his tribe, the traveller, dressed in his new costume, undertook to deliver a course of lectures, in which he graphically described what he had witnessed. For a while he was listened to with attention; but as soon as the minds of his audience had received as much as they could hold, they began to disbelieve him. Nothing daunted, however, the traveller still proceeded. He told them of wigwams, in which a thousand people could, at the same time, pray to the Great Spirit; of other wigwams, five stories high, built in lines facing each other, and extending over an enormous space; he told them of war-canoes that could hold twelve hundred warriors. Such tales to the Indian mind seemed an insult to common sense. For some time he was treated merely with ridicule and contempt, but when, resolutely continuing to recount his adventures, he told them that he had seen the white people, by attaching a great ball to a canoe, rise into the clouds, and travel through the heavens, the learned men of his tribe pronounced him to be an impostor, and, the multitude vociferously declaring *that he was too great a liar to live*, a young warrior, in a parox-

ysm of anger, levelled a rifle at his head, and blew out his brains.

If what takes place in another climate, or in a different state of society appears absurd, because it is contrary to our experience, shall we greatly wonder that the things of the Spirit of God,—those heavenly and eternal things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, should be foolishness to all who have not the spirit, and who are consequently alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, and who love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil?

In the gospel we have the fullest display of the Divine character; and since the carnal mind is enmity against God, since God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, while every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; it is surely not surprising that the truth as it is in Jesus, should be a stumbling stone and a rock of offence. Hence, the disposition in all men by nature to corrupt the gospel, and thus to render it more palatable. They may succeed, but it is at the expense of substituting an idol for the God of truth. The character of our God is embodied in our views of the gospel. The glory of God shines in the face of Christ, and this glory is obscured by every deviation from the doctrine of scripture.

Mr Hinton observes, that when he asserts that God was manifest in the flesh, the proposition is quite intelligible. But the apostle asserts that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3.; and this truth is reiterated throughout

the scriptures, and is exemplified in the avowed rejection of the supreme Deity of Christ by so many around us, while others profess to receive it, upon whose hearts it makes no impression. He tells us, "The measure of understanding of the scriptures which suffices for him to reject the gospel certainly might suffice for embracing it." P. 27. But both scripture and experience teach us that such is *not* the case; and even our Author admits, that no man ever did or will believe the gospel, except by the power of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, he objects to the doctrine of either natural or moral inability, because this would interfere with man's responsibility. I have already stated that I am fully satisfied that man is responsible, but I do not attempt to reconcile this responsibility with the plain and oft repeated declarations of the Word of God, confirmed by universal experience, that such is the natural love of darkness and hatred of light in the mind of fallen man, that it can only be dispelled by God shining into his heart, and giving him the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

"I should like," says Mr Hinton, "any person who permits himself to use the phrases *spiritual truth and spiritual perception*, to tell me whether he ever did, or can at this moment, attach an idea to them. What is the property of *spirituality*, as connected with truth? Or what is the peculiarity denoted in any truth by calling it *spiritual?* Or what is *spiritual perception?* Is it any thing different from ordinary perception? And if so, in what respect? By spiritual truth I can understand only truth relating to religion. By spiritual perception I suppose may be intended the perception of religi-

ous truth with a corresponding feeling. So understood, however, the phrases are nothing to the purpose in hand. Those who intend them to express a reason for believing that men in general cannot understand the gospel, must mean, or seem to mean, something else by them; but what it may be I confess myself unable to comprehend, nor do I think they can explain it themselves."—Pp. 30, 31.

By spiritual truth is meant, the truth as it is in Jesus, which, according to the Word of God, is only discerned by those who are spiritual, or have the spirit of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 15. The perception of the way of salvation, which all possess who are taught of God, is spiritual perception, or the perception of spiritual things, as opposed to natural perception, or the perception of natural things. The natural man either rejects the scriptures altogether, or perverts the doctrine of Christ. Not unfrequently by the help of criticism and conjectural emendations of the text, he modifies it so as to coincide with his own apprehensions, and thus forms a god resembling himself. Such is the god of the Rationalists and Neologists.

Spiritual perception is always accompanied with corresponding feeling, for the man who possesses it is born of God, is partaker of "a divine nature;" 2 Pet. i. 4. When the Lord declared that when the Spirit came, he would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, he intimated that he would give men spiritual perception. There are truths relating to religion, which may be and are received without the teaching of the Spirit; for instance, the existence of God,—his government of the world,—and our moral obligations. Spiritual truths are those which flesh and blood cannot reveal, but which God reveals by his Spirit to the heirs of salvation.

CHAPTER III.

Examination of 1 Cor. ii. 14. ;—in what sense the gospel is understood without Divine teaching;—the blind lecturer on optics ;—the success of Mr Locke's experiment ;—1 John v. 20.

The apostle asserts, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and, considering that our author admits that, in reference to the conversion of a sinner, the influence of the Spirit is *absolutely necessary and certainly effectual*, he might have adhered to the plain and obvious import of the passage ; but as this would sanction the doctrine of man's inability to turn to God, he attempts to explain it in consistency with his system.

He begins by asserting, page 31, that "upon examination it will be found not to refer to the knowledge of the gospel at all, but to the reception or approbation of it." In proof of this he quotes 1 Cor. ii. 12. : "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God ;" and observes, "The word here rendered *know*, primarily means to *see* ; but is used on some occasions to denote an actual participation either of good or evil." To this there is no objection. Seeing or knowing death or corruption no doubt implies actual participation ; but the same word is used, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, "God *knoweth*;" John xxi. 15, 16, "Thou *knowest* that I love thee ;" Rom. viii. 28, "We *know* that all things work together for good ;" Heb. x. 30, "We *know* him that hath said." In these and

many other passages, actual participation is not implied. The word is properly rendered *know;* it means to see or perceive with the eyes of the mind. This is most evident from the preceding verses, where the apostle is neither speaking of bodily sight nor of participation, but of mental perception; and he affirms, that "as no man *knoweth* the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, so no man *knoweth* the things of God but the Spirit of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Our author proceeds thus to paraphrase verse 12. "We," says Paul, (speaking of Christians, no doubt) "have received not the spirit [or temper] of the world, but the spirit [or temper] which is of God, that we may know [that is, may participate, or experimentally enjoy] the things which are freely given to us of God,"—p. 32. In this verse the apostle refers to the fulfilment of the promise made by the Lord to his disciples, that he would send the Spirit of truth, who should guide them into all the truth, John xvi. 13.; but our author substitutes temper for spirit, and thus sanctions a method of altogether setting aside the work of the Holy Spirit. We do not impute to him such an intention, but if the Holy Spirit may be kept out of sight in this passage, and the word *temper* substituted, there are few passages where his operation, or even his subsistence as one of the adorable Persons in the unity of the Godhead, may not be set aside.

When the apostle says, verse 11, that "only the Spirit of God knoweth the things of God," does he speak of a temper, or of the Holy Ghost? Most assuredly of the Holy Ghost. He then proceeds to

state that he and his brethren had received the Spirit which is of God, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." This is the Spirit promised by Jesus, when he said, "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost." The fulfilment of this promise was the effect of Christ's death and exaltation, John vii. 39; and so important was it, that it more than compensated for his bodily presence and personal instructions, John xvi. 7.

The indwelling of the Spirit is the common privilege of all believers; "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit;" 1 Cor. xii. 13. "If any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. Mr Hinton may tell us this also means the *temper* of Christ; but surely it is by the Holy Spirit, not by a temper, that we are to be raised from the dead, Rom. viii. 10, 11.

It is the characteristic of every child of the new covenant, that he is taught by the Spirit of God; our coming to Christ is the effect of this teaching, John vi. 45; yet our author, in his zeal for his system, sets aside one of the most explicit proofs of this fundamental truth, by arbitrarily changing the *Spirit* which is of God, to the *temper* which is of God.

The impropriety of this interpretation is still more evident from the intermediate verse, which Mr Hinton has passed over in paraphrasing the preceding and following verses: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. ii. 13. Here

the apostle declares that he spoke the things which he knew by "the Spirit which is of God," in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Not only did he *know* the things of God by the Spirit of God, but he spoke of them, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. So glorious and important were the revelations which he received by the Spirit, that he was not permitted to express them in his own words, but in words dictated by the Holy Spirit; under whose infallible guidance, he compared spiritual things with spiritual. But, notwithstanding the glory and excellency of the things revealed by the Spirit of God, and which the apostle declared in the words of inspiration, such is the blindness of the natural man, (of every man who has not the Spirit, Jude 19,) that he does not receive "the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Here the apostle repeats what he had said in verses 11th and 12th, that the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, and those who are taught by the Spirit.

We have already noticed Mr Hinton's criticism upon the word rendered *know*, in verse 12, and have given various instances (to which many others might be added,) which prove that it is properly translated. In verse 14, a different word is employed by the apostle, "Neither can he *know* them;" and Mr Hinton will admit that it primarily signifies to know. The same word is used when our Lord says, "This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,"

John xvii. 3. We might refer to many other passages, in which the knowledge of the gospel is represented as peculiar to those who are taught of God, but we only mention one: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John viii. 32. Here men being made free from sin, or a proper *temper* of mind being produced in them, is ascribed to their *knowing*, or becoming acquainted with the truth, "which effectually worketh in them that believe," 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Mr Hinton deems it expedient to explain *foolishness* as meaning things "worthless and disagreeable," but the former is the proper rendering. It is opposed to wisdom: "Hath not God made *foolish* the *wisdom* of this world," 1 Cor. i. 20. When "the world by *wisdom* knew not God, it pleased God by the *foolishness* of preaching to save them that believe," verse 21. "The Greeks seek after *wisdom*, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks *foolishness*," verse 23. "The *foolishness* of God is *wiser* than man," verse 25. God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise," verse 27. When, therefore, the apostle says that the things of the Spirit of God are *foolishness* to the natural man, he repeats what he had dwelt so much upon in the preceding chapter respecting his blindness and ignorance.

As to the gospel being understood by all, it is true in one sense, and false in another. Men may understand that the gospel represents them as lost and condemned, and reveals salvation by faith in Jesus. They may see that it places all men upon the same level—that the murderer and blasphemer

are invited to the enjoyment of eternal life, precisely on the same footing as the most benevolent philanthropist—that publicans and harlots are nearer the kingdom of God than devout and self-righteous religionists. So far it is quite intelligible; but men cannot understand *how* these things should be. No evidence can convince them; such doctrine is to them a stumbling-block and foolishness. When the high priest asked the Lord Jesus, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed," he perfectly understood the Lord's reply; but that the King Messiah, of whom such glorious things were written, should stand as a friendless culprit before his bar, was a stumbling-block which he could not overstep. The Greeks who sought after wisdom, heard the apostles affirm that there was no salvation except through faith in a man who had been crucified as a malefactor at Jerusalem. This doctrine was foolishness to them; they understood the terms of the proposition, but the truth which it contained was so completely opposed to all their preconceived notions, so much at variance with what they termed "reason and common sense," that they treated it with scorn and contempt.

Many who have not the Spirit, profess to believe the gospel, but it is a gospel modified to their corrupt taste; it is another gospel, not the gospel of Christ. Men may, indeed, learn to talk with accuracy of the doctrines of the gospel; just as a man born blind may talk of light and colours, while he is totally ignorant of both. I once heard such a person lecture upon optics to a crowded auditory, and I thought at the time there was not perhaps an indi-

vidual present who could speak so well on the subject, and yet all who heard him knew the meaning of light and colours, while he had not one just idea of the terms which he employed. The experiment of Mr Locke is well known. He attempted to explain to a blind man the difference of colours, and, after exhausting all his ingenuity, he asked his pupil what his notion was of the colour of scarlet, of which he professed to have received some knowledge; in reply, he was informed that it appeared to resemble the sound of a trumpet! What else could be expected? Being destitute of sight, no language could give him any just conception of the objects of vision. The believer knows God as he is revealed in his Son, but he cannot communicate this knowledge to another. All the children of the new covenant have heard (compare John viii. 43) and been taught by the great prophet, Eph. iv. 21. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase."

Our author admits that in 1 John v. 20, the term *understanding* relates to the faculty of knowledge. This is indeed most obvious; the apostle says, "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may *know* him that is true;" and we may observe that the same word is employed, as in 1 Cor. ii. 14, where we are told "the natural man cannot *know* the things of the Spirit of God." Mr Hinton would, however, restrict the knowledge spoken of 1 John v. 10, to "the special operation of God upon the writer, and other inspired men." This supposition is perfectly gratuitous. Throughout the epistle, the apostle classes his brethren along with himself,

and very frequently employs the same language, "we *know*."* Many attempt to set aside the work of the Spirit altogether, by representing the passages in which it is treated of as referring to inspired men and miraculous gifts. There is no more "presumption" in believers saying, "we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness," than in saying, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him," 1 Thess. v. 9, 10; or "we know that we have eternal life," to assure the believers of which, the apostle wrote the epistle; 1 John v. 13.

On the whole, Mr Hinton has completely failed in his attempt to prove that any child of Adam can *understand* the gospel, except by the teaching of the Spirit of God. He at last admits that a great many do not understand it, which he ascribes to "the prevalence of evil passions, which renders them very averse to the contemplation of it." Most assuredly it is men's alienation from the life of God, with their consequent love of darkness and hatred of the light, which blinds their minds, which leads them to prefer the service of Satan to the service of God; and so strong is this principle, that every man in whom it has been overcome has been the subject of the same mighty power by which Christ was raised from the dead, Eph. i. 16—20.

Our author maintains that "every man of sound mind is capable of understanding the scripture in its general truths; or, in other words, the precepts and

* See 1 John iii. 14, 19; iv. 13, 16; v. 2, 15, 18, 19.

motives addressed to him by his Maker for the regulation of his conduct."—P. 34. If by the general truths of scripture, or the precepts and motives addressed to man, is meant the moral law, by which our conduct ought to be regulated, we have no objections to this statement; but if the way of salvation by the Son of God is intended, the whole tenor of scripture contradicts the assertion, and declares that "no man knows the truth as it is in Jesus but he that is taught of God, Mat. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 12. Mr Hinton admits that such is practically the case; for he holds that, in reference to the conversion of a sinner, the influence of the Spirit is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY; and according to the word of God, conversion and the knowledge of the truth are convertible terms.

CHAPTER IV.

Actions performed freely, yet ordained;—Sennacherib;—Ahab;—the death of Christ determined, yet no apology for his murderers;—Joseph;—Absalom;—mystery of Providence.

"WITHOUT pretending to explain," says Mr Hinton, "how the Creator may have found it practicable to limit his own interference, and to assign to some of his creatures, properly endowed for it, a definite sphere of independent action, we can find no difficulty in believing that this is possible. At all events, we are sure that no one can prove that it is not; and unless this is proved, nothing is proved to the purpose of the argument."—P. 17.

This is one of those untaught questions which has "a show of wisdom," while it is calculated to turn us away from the simplicity that is in Christ. In God we live, and move, and have our being; in his hand is our breath, and his are all our ways; but still we are responsible, and shall give an account of ourselves to God. Whether it may fall within the sphere of our philosophy or not, the Scriptures represent those actions which we perform most freely as having been ordained of God, and brought to pass by his agency. HE SENT "the Assyrian against an hypocritical nation, and gave him a charge against the people of his wrath to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the street;" Isa. x. 6. The haughty monarch is thus addressed: "Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou

shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps;" 2 Kings xix. 25. Meantime Sennacherib was only intent upon the gratification of his own ambition, and when the Lord had made what use of him he saw fit, he punished him for his pride and cruelty in the exercise of the commission which he had given him; Isaiah x. 5—12.

God had determined that Ahab should fall at Ramoth-Gilead, yet he went voluntarily, after being solemnly warned of the result of his journey. Nay, the veil which conceals the great Creator from human view was withdrawn, and Ahab was informed of the means by which his destruction was to be effected. The prophet told him, "that he had seen Jehovah upon his throne, surrounded by all the host of heaven. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?" Different plans were proposed, but a spirit undertook the task, which he engaged to accomplish by being a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. And the Lord said, "Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so." Yet Ahab was warned, "The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee;" 1 Kings xxii. 23. And what was the issue? Ahab went, and fell at Ramoth-Gilead, and he went most freely. The net was spread in the sight of the bird; Micaiah pledged his prophetic mission—in other words, his life, for a false prophet was to be put to death,—upon the fulfilment of the prediction; yet the Lord's purpose stood, and in this, as in every other matter, he did all his pleasure.

If we are guided by the Scriptures, we shall not perplex ourselves with vainly attempting to reconcile the sovereignty of God with human responsibility. It is a matter too high for us; we cannot attain to it. The death of Christ was fore-ordained, yet this did not interfere with the responsibility of those who fulfilled the Divine purpose. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," Acts ii. 23. Again, "Those things," says the apostle, "which God before had showed by the mouths of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" Acts iii. 18, 19. "Had they known it, (the hidden wisdom which God had ordained before the world for our glory,) they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" 1 Cor. ii. 8. Yet their ignorance formed no apology for their conduct; "with wicked hands" they fulfilled God's determination. It is worthy of attention how frequently the determinate purpose of God that Christ should suffer, is repeated in connexion with the wickedness of the Jews, as if to impress more powerfully on our minds the perfect consistency of what appears to us so mysterious. "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was *determined*; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" Luke xxii. 22. "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy

hand and thy counsel *determined* before to be done;" Acts iv. 27, 28. "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every sabbath-day, they have *fulfilled* them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain;" Acts xiii. 27, 28.

Why will Mr Hinton attempt to explain what in the present state of our knowledge is inexplicable? Why will he not rest in the facts narrated in the Word of God? It will be his wisdom,—to use his own words,—to "put this doctrine among things mysterious; resting its reception on the authority of the inspired volume, confirmed by nature and providence, and leaving its vindication to a future day, the day of 'the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.'" —P.11. In this way alone will he find rest to his own mind, and promote the peace and comfort of others.

In direct opposition to the passages referred to, which assert, in the plainest terms, that God predetermined the death of Christ, without in the smallest degree diminishing the guilt of his murderers; our author informs us, that he does not believe "that God predetermined the actions of men."–P. 63. The death of Christ was the most important event which ever took place in the universe, and, moreover, the greatest act of wickedness ever perpetrated by any of the human race—it places in the clearest light man's rooted enmity against God; yet it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, who, through the sinful ignorance of the Jews, fulfilled the predictions which he had delivered by his

prophets, and thus did what his hand and counsel determined before to be done. If this did not interfere with the responsibility of the perpetrators of such enormous wickedness, why should we hesitate to admit the harmony of the same elements in other cases ?

Mr Hinton holds that God predetermines his own actions, and that, in forming the scheme of his own conduct, he could not but incorporate in his plan the foreseen conduct of others; but it seems to him absurd "that God should first endow beings to act independently of him, and then, grasping them by his decrees, predetermine their actions."–P.63. But scripture, as well as reason, spurns the notion of creatures being endowed to act independently of their Creator. They live, and move, and have their being in him, and yet they feel that they act voluntarily, and are responsible for their conduct. As to predetermining men's actions, no language can be more precise than what is employed respecting the death of Christ. The plain and explicit declarations of the Word of God ought to be to the Christian what the test of experiment is to the philosopher. If he has ascertained, by experiment, that any substance possesses a certain property, he smiles at every theory, however plausible, which professes to prove the contrary. Now, the question of God's absolute sovereignty in accomplishing his purposes, while it in no degree impinges upon man's responsibility, is established by the matter of fact, that God had predetermined the death of Christ, and that still the conduct of the Jews was inexcusable.

Again, *He sent* Joseph into Egypt, that he might,

so to speak, provide a cradle for his peculiar people, till they were multiplied to a nation, Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8; Psal. cv. 17.; yet this was no palliation of the wickedness of the patriarchs who sold him. God put it in the heart of the ten kings to fulfil his will, and to give their kingdom to the beast till the words of God should be fulfilled, Rev. xvii. 17.; yet will they be called to account for this part of their conduct. The wickedness perpetrated by Absalom, at the suggestion of Ahitophel, is horrible, yet, in foretelling it, as well as the murder of Amnon, and other bloody scenes which took place in David's family, God ascribes it to himself: "I WILL RAISE up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I WILL TAKE thy wives," &c.; 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12.

On account of Solomon's countenancing the idolatry of his wives, God declared he would rend from his son the greater part of his kingdom; and the manner in which this was accomplished illustrates our present subject. The Scripture informs us that Jeroboam "lifted up his hand against the king. And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king;" 1 Kings xi. 27. We are then informed, that the prophet Abijah rent Jeroboam's new garment in twelve pieces, desiring him to take ten pieces, and informing him that he should reign over ten tribes; 1 Kings xi. 26, 35. Accordingly, when all Israel went to Shechem to make Rehoboam king, they asked him to make the heavy yoke of his father lighter. He answered them roughly, and, in consequence, Jeroboam became king over ten tribes, according to the word of the Lord. While the conduct of Rehoboam was very foolish upon this occasion, we are told the

cause was of God, 2 Chron. x. 15. The conduct of the ten tribes was also highly blameable. In rejecting the house of David, they discovered their disregard of the promise of Messiah, who was to spring from David. When Rehoboam raised an army for the recovery of his kingdom over Israel, he was commanded to forbear, for, said the Lord, "This thing is from me." No doubt, all parties were guilty of much sin in the whole transaction, for which they were responsible; but God declares, "this thing is done of me," 2 Chron. xi. 4. By his prophet, he had encouraged Jeroboam in his schemes of ambition, by assuring him of success, 1 Kings xi. 37.

Such is the uniform doctrine of the Word of God, and if he governs the universe, and orders all things, from the rise of an empire to the fall of a sparrow, it must be so, although we may not be able to reconcile his absolute sovereignty with our responsibility. The mystery of Providence is equally great: God fixes the bounds of our habitation; yet we feel ourselves at perfect liberty to go wherever we have the means of going. In regard to our continuance in this world, our days are determined, the number of our months are with him,—he has appointed our bounds which we cannot pass, yet, who but a madman neglects the means of self-preservation?

CHAPTER V.

Isaiah xlv. 7;—Amos iii. 6;—Rom. ix. 18;—new translation inadmissible;—the sovereignty of God consistent with man's responsibility;—case of Pharaoh;—Ezek. xxi. 19, 21;—Isaiah vi. 9;—Rom. xi. 7, 8.

Mr Hinton having quoted six passages of scripture, proceeds, page 18: "Such are the principal, I believe I may say all the passages of sacred writ, to be adduced in support of the opinion that God does all things, and is the real Author of even the blindness and obduracy of men." No man who trembles at the Word of God, asserts that God is the Author of the blindness and obduracy of men, in any sense which would palliate their guilt. In referring to the passages which he has selected, our author observes, that they constitute a narrow foundation for such a superstructure, but they might be almost indefinitely multiplied, for the truth which they contain is placed in a great variety of lights in the Word of God.

We shall, however, attend to the passages to which he refers: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things;" Isaiah xlv. 7. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6. No doubt these passages refer to "suffering and calamity," but the agents by whom this calamity was inflicted, were instruments employed by God to execute his vengeance. We have already referred to the mission of the Assyrian, for the

punishment of Israel. Let us take another example; the Lord held the right hand of Cyrus, that he might subdue the nations before him. The grand object which God had in view, in the success which attended this mighty conqueror, is thus stated: "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts;" Isaiah xlv. 13. He represents himself as "calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country; yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it;" Isaiah xlvi. 11. Can words more plainly state that Cyrus was an instrument employed by God, as the Assyrian had been, of whom the Lord says, "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood," Isaiah x. 15.

"From the other passages, says our author, "which all relate to the one point of God's being the Author of men's blindness and obduracy, one must be entirely separated; we mean Rom. ix. 18. 'Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he *hardeneth*.'"—P. 18.

Mr Hinton admits, that σκληρύνω, here rendered to harden, has this meaning, but maintains that this is not always the case, in proof of which, he adduces two passages from the Septuagint. The first is Job xxxix. 16. "She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers." This,

our author pronounces an unhappy rendering, but gives no reason for preferring, "she treateth severely." The rendering in our version is at once more literal* and more expressive. The other passage is 2 Chron. x. 4. "Thy father made our yoke grievous," literally *hardened* our yoke.† These passages, however, are so satisfactory to our author that, without farther remark, he tells us, "one meaning of σκληρύνω, therefore, is *to treat severely;* and we are at full liberty to make experiment of its suitableness to the passage under consideration." The foundation of this superstructure is sufficiently "narrow;" but, in reference to Rom. ix. 18, he proceeds, "Let us now read it again. 'He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he *treateth severely*.' I ask any reader, without being a critic, to say whether this is not a far more suitable rendering than the other; whether it is not strongly indicated by the parallelism of the passage and the antithetic character of the first clause, and whether it does not perfectly harmonize with the context? I think every considerate person will adopt it without hesitation; and will agree with me in concluding that the passage has no relation to the subject on which it is adduced, namely, the hardening of the heart. To show this, is all we have to do with it at present."—P. 19.

This is a very easy method of getting rid of a difficulty, and with these remarks Mr Hinton dismisses

* Nobilius, in a *note* upon the passage, explains the word as signifying to treat hardly or severely, while in the text, he renders it harden, which is the uniform meaning of the word.

† Our author would not probably say, 'treated our yoke severely.' This would be absurd, and hence we see that Mr Hinton's emendation is not a translation but a paraphrase, and as such it is given in the note of Nobilius.

the passage. But it must be recollected, that the severe treatment which, according to our author, God inflicts upon "whom he will," includes the destruction of both soul and body in hell; for such will be the portion of all who do not obtain mercy, and who are therefore afterwards described as vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, Rom. ix. 22. Taking this into account, we shall probably find that the amount of difficulty got rid of by the new translation, or rather, paraphrase, is not very great. As to "the parallelism of the passage, and the antithetic character of the first clause," they are better preserved in the common version, and we know no reason for preferring the emendation, except that it has a show (for it is nothing more) of obviating an insuperable difficulty to our author's theory.

But the passage itself contains a *demonstration* that the word is properly rendered in our version. The apostle, in answering the question, "is there unrighteousness with God," in loving Jacob and hating Esau before the children were born, neither having done any good or evil, Rom. ix. 14, replies—By no means; "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," Rom. ix. 15, 16.

Having referred to the case of Pharaoh, who had been raised up that God might show his power in him, he adds, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" ver. 18, 19.

Here is the objection which has been brought against the Divine sovereignty from that day to this, and which will continue to be brought by every man whose high imaginations are not cast down, and who has not learned that the only way to be wise in this world is to become a fool, and to say with the Psalmist, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child," Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2; or with Job, "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not," Job xlii. 3. Neither Mr Hinton, nor any one else, can adduce a more plausible objection against God's hardening men, and yet holding them responsible, than the apostle brings forward, and we see that he treats it with very little ceremony: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. ix. 20.

Having illustrated his subject by the potter's power over the clay to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour, the apostle inquires, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the

Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" verses 22, 23, 24. This exactly corresponds with the declaration, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. xvi. 4. All are by nature the children of wrath, and it is of the Lord's mercy all are not consumed; but, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9, he bestows salvation upon an innumerable multitude of the sons of fallen Adam. At the same time, he endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, who remain under the righteous curse of the broken law, while he makes known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, whether Jews or Gentiles, whom he hath afore prepared unto glory, having chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. i. 4.

Let us now try how Mr Hinton's emendation corresponds with the scope of the passage, "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he *treateth severely*." An objector might reply, this is partiality, but how could he inquire "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" and yet the objection was so obvious, that the apostle anticipates it, "thou wilt say." He was aware that his doctrine was liable to this cavil, yet he states it without attempting to solve the difficulty, farther than by showing that it is of the Lord's mercy that any escape.

We have, then, no need of the aid of criticism to fix the meaning of the word employed by the apostle,

and literally rendered *harden* by our translators; no other rendering will suit the scope of the passage. To the assertion as it stands in our version, the objection necessarily suggests itself. If God hardens whom he will, why doth he find fault with those whom he hath hardened? Here is apparent inconsistency, not to say injustice in the Divine procedure, which human wisdom is unable to reconcile. Here the lofty looks of man are humbled, and the most acute philosopher must either reject the doctrine or receive it as a little child.

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are perfectly consistent, because both are asserted with equal precision in the Word of God; but neither Mr Hinton nor any one else, can explain *how* this is the case, more than he can explain *how* the grass grows, or *how* his mind acts upon his body when he chooses to move his finger, while the fact that he can do so is palpable. Not long since, I was present at the examination of a class of boys who had lately begun Latin. One of them gave the rule for a particular construction. The master said, "I would rather you did not give that rule, it only makes you think you understand it, which you do not; for the present, take it as a fact: you will afterwards see why it is so." Many things in the Word of God must be taken as facts; hereafter we shall see their perfect consistency, although at present they are too high for us.

Our author tells us, that no man can, by reasoning prove the existence of the material universe, although no one ever doubted it. Let him, then, be satisfied with the uniform testimony of God respecting human responsibility, confirmed, as it is, by every

man's consciousness, without attempting to prove it by speculations which only darken counsel by words without knowledge, and which cannot possibly bring conviction to the mind. Saving faith is not the result of a train of reasoning, however plausible; it is the submission of the mind to the authority of God, and is the fruit of his Word coming to us, not in word but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

With regard to God hardening Pharaoh's heart, "so often and so forcibly repeated," and which our author observes, "has no doubt, a great appearance of precision," he observes, that its apparent force is "much diminished by the circumstance, that the historian employs, on other occasions, different language, in relation to the same fact. "If he tells us several times," says Mr Hinton, "that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, he tells us several times, also, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart; see Exod. viii. 15, 32, &c.; and if the former phrase be taken as proving the one opinion, the latter may with equal justice be alleged to prove the other. No doubt the proper mode is to interpret the two phrases harmoniously, so that the one shall not be made to contradict the other. This evidently cannot be done by understanding both of them literally. We must see which of them requires this. If we say that the Lord really hardened Pharaoh's heart, there is no sense in which we can understand the declaration that he hardened his own heart; but if we interpret it literally, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, we shall be able to find a consistent meaning for the assertion that it was hardened by the

Lord. For it is according to the general style and mode of Hebrew composition, to express after this manner, the certainty of existing or future facts, together with God's foreknowledge of them and controul over them. So when the Lord says, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart,' I conceive it not to be intended that he would, or did, exercise any influence aggravating or confirming his obstinacy; but that the meaning is no more than what is elsewhere conveyed in the terms, '*I am sure* he will not let you go.' The declaration,—'For this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show forth my power in thee,' clearly does not require to be understood of God's producing Pharaoh's wickedness, but is fairly explicable of his placing this impetuous man in such circumstances as should render his history an eminent illustration of the Divine government."—Pp. 20, 21.

That God did not produce Pharaoh's wickedness, we are well assured; but we understand both phrases of God hardening Pharaoh's heart, and of Pharaoh hardening his own heart, in their plain and obvious meaning. We dare not attempt to explain away either the one or the other. We see in this passage the doctrine which runs through the whole of the Word of God, that God doth in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, what seemeth good in his sight, while man is responsible for his conduct. The case of Pharaoh is introduced by the apostle to illustrate the declaration that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" in other words, that in the salvation of some and the condemnation of others, "he gives not account of any of his matters;" and that

the salvation of sinners is owing not to their own exertions, but to God that showeth mercy, Rom. ix. 15, 16. This absolute sovereignty is confirmed by the example of Pharaoh, who was raised up for the purpose of showing God's power, and that his name (or character) might be declared throughout all the earth, from which the inspired apostle draws the conclusion, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," Rom. ix. 18. The scope of the passage, therefore, fixes its meaning. Our author tells us the meaning of "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," is no more than what is elsewhere conveyed in the terms, "*I am sure* he will not let thee go." How then, could the apostle draw from such premises the conclusion, that God hardeneth whom he will, and then state the objection which we have already considered, "Why doth he yet find fault?" ver. 19.

There is no real inconsistency between God hardening Pharaoh's heart, and his hardening his own heart; but there is precisely the same difficulty which we find in reconciling Divine sovereignty and human responsibility. There is a sense in which God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and a sense in which he hardened his own heart. This conclusion we draw from the express declaration of the Word of God. President Edwards observes: "In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest; but God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper Author and Fountain: we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive

and wholly active. In the scriptures, the same things are represented as from God and from us.—God is said to convert; and men are said to convert and turn.—God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart.—God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do."*

We may not be able to explain *how* these things can be, but we believe them upon the Divine testimony, and should we hesitate to submit our understanding to the express declarations of our Creator, the questions, —"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts" Zech. viii. 6. "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. ix. 20,—would make our ears to tingle. We are told "it is according to the general style and mode of Hebrew composition to express after this manner the certainty of existing or future facts."—Pp. 20, 21. It has pleased God to employ the Hebrew language in delivering to us the lively oracles of the Old Testament, and we may rest assured there is nothing in its style or mode of composition, to obscure the revelation with which the Almighty has condescended to favour us. We have already proved that the whole scope of the passage clearly ascertains its meaning, independently of the idiom of any particular language.

* Remarks on Important Theological Controversies, vol. ii. p. 251. Edin. 1796.

Our author admits "the certainty of existing or future facts, together with God's foreknowledge of them and controul over them." Now, God informed Moses that he would controul the future fact of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, which should certainly take place, or in other words, he would harden his heart. This does not imply that he was tempted of God, for he "cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man;" but for the sake of his people Israel, and in order that he might multiply his signs in Egypt, he hardened Pharaoh's heart, as he sent Ahab to fall at Ramoth Gilead, Sennacherib to lay waste Judah, Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem, and, afterwards, Titus, in the same month, and the same day of the month, to burn the temple. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus, all acted voluntarily, but at the same time, they did what God had determined before should he done.

One method which God employed to harden Pharaoh's heart, was the successive removal of the plagues, upon the promise of amendment, but instead of the goodness of God leading him to repentance, after his hardness and impenitent heart, he treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, and thus God's purpose in raising him up,—that, for the benefit of his people in every succeeding age, he might show his power in him—was accomplished.

Another means which God employed to harden Pharaoh's heart, probably, was giving success to the attempts of the magicians to imitate some of the miracles of Moses; but we do not rest the fact of God's hardening Pharaoh's heart upon any explana-

tion which we are able to give; we are satisfied upon the subject by the express testimony of God.

Our attention is next directed to the language of the prophets, and, our Author observes, that in Ezek. xxi. 19, 21, it is simply foretold "that Nebuchadnezzar would make war upon both the Ammonites and Jews, and would use divination to determine the order of his attack."—P. 21. But much more is foretold. The Lord declares he will so order the result of the divination,—which the Jews would treat with contempt as an idolatrous rite,—that Nebuchadnezzar should fix upon Jerusalem as the object of attack; in other words, God had predetermined this action of Nebuchadnezzar for the purpose of punishing the perjury of the king, and the wickedness of the people. "Of the same style," he observes, "the words from Isaiah are an obvious example. When the Lord said to him in vision, 'Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes,' the design evidently was not to direct him to produce such effects upon the people, but to declare that they did exist, and were foreseen."—P. 22.

Certainly the fatness of the people's heart, the heaviness of their ears, and the shutting of their eyes, did *not exist,* for the prediction referred to those who lived seven hundred years after the prediction was delivered; but the prophet was commanded to foretell that they *should exist.* No one supposes that the prophet was to produce such effects upon the people who lived so long after his death, but he foretells what should certainly take place, according to the determinate purpose of God, and hence it is said, "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said

again, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them;" John xii. 39, 40.

In regard to Isaiah vi. 9.: "And he said, Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not;" Mr Hinton says, "The prophet is here directed to affirm that the people *do see and hear*, (they are, therefore, neither blind nor deaf,) but they *do not perceive nor understand;* that is, they do not attend to what they see and hear, so as to be influenced by it. The blindness charged upon men, therefore, is not a defective capacity to know, but a habit of inattention to what may be known; not any thing amiss in the eye, but a closing of it against the light, or an aversion of it from the object which should be contemplated. In a word, the blindness of men to religious truth is precisely the blindness of those who will not see."—Pp. 29, 30.

Upon this we remark, that not perceiving or understanding is not synonymous with a habit of inattention. We sometimes see men's attention engrossed with the subject of religion, while they derive no comfort from it. Doubtless, men's love of darkness, and hatred of the light, prevent their receiving the truth as it is in Jesus; and, according to our author, this hatred never yields, except to the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit. In the following verse, the prophet is commanded to make their heart fat, their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes; in other words, to foretell what should assuredly take place, yet there was to be a

remnant; verse 13. Such was the determination of God made known by the prophet, and its fulfilment is recorded in the New Testament: "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace;" Rom. xi. 5. If, as our author affirms, there be nothing amiss in the eye, why does God promise to give men "eyes to see?" Why does he describe them as blind requiring to have their eyes opened, or anointed with eye salve *that they may see?* Rev. iii. 18. Why does the Psalmist pray, "*Open thou mine eyes*, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law?" Psal. cxix. 18.

"The passage from Rom. xi. 7, 8," Mr Hinton informs us, "is to be explained in a similar manner. The Israelites who rejected the Messiah 'were blinded,' no doubt, by their own pride and prejudices; and when it is said that 'God gave them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear,' it is but a usual mode of indicating that he was not at all taken by surprise by their stubbornness, or unprepared to accomplish his purposes notwithstanding the manifestation of it."—P. 22. We prefer, however, the passage as it stands in the scripture, which cannot be broken, from which we learn that in every age there was among the Jews a remnant according to the election of grace, and that this remnant had attained to righteousness, while the nation in general was blinded, according to the prophecies which had gone before. Mr Hinton's interpretation is completely at variance with the obvious meaning of the passage.

CHAPTER VI.

In what sense men are blind to the truth;—men naturally in bondage;—its nature renders it more hopeless;—the drunkard;—Mr Hinton's admission that the problem of causation and voluntary action is perhaps incapable of solution;—why then attempt it?—voluntary action ordained;—the source of man's enmity against his Maker;—he is incapable of producing love to God;—reconciliation;—erroneous view of the moral law.

In reply to those who hold the truth so plainly taught in the Word of God, that men are naturally blind to divine truth, Mr Hinton observes, "that if, on the one hand, the scriptures declare that men are blind, they affirm, on the other, that men both can and do see,"—p. 28. In proof of this he quotes John xv. 24. "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Christ had appeared among them, had exhibited to them the character of God, for he is the "image of the invisible God," but the natural enmity of their hearts against God led them to turn with loathing and disgust from the heavenly vision, and thus their guilt was greatly aggravated by the privilege which they had enjoyed. If men were blind they would have no sin, John ix. 41. They have sufficient light to render them responsible, but flesh and blood cannot reveal to the human mind the glory of the plan of redemption. We agree with our author when he says, "there is one sense in which men are blind to religious truth, and another in which they are not blind to it,"—p. 29. They are blind to its glory and excellency, but they are

just as able to apprehend what believers wish them to receive, as the king of Siam when the ambassador told him that in France men walked upon the water, while he had no idea of the nature of ice. The more the natural man apprehends of the truth the more is his enmity roused. A perverted gospel modified by human wisdom, such as that taught by the Judaizers, tends in a great measure to remove the offence of the cross; and Mr Hinton must excuse our thinking that, although he may not mean it, such is the tendency of his speculations.

One of the elements of human responsibility, according to our author, is freedom. "Free action," he says, "and forced action are so distinct from each other, both in their essential properties and in the sensations accompanying them, that it is hard to conceive how either should fail to be discerned, or how the one should be mistaken for the other."—P. 35.

Every man feels that he acts freely, yet the scripture testifies that he is "led captive by the devil at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. When Adam disobeyed, he chose a new God, he gave himself up to the guidance of Satan, who is therefore termed "the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin," John viii. 34; and from this bondage we can only be delivered by the power of the Son of God: "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John viii. 36. Hence the apostle says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17. Of this Spirit believers, and they only, are partakers, Rom. viii. 9. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is

not subject to the law of God, neither indeed CAN be," Rom. viii. 7. Fallen man is sold under sin, the servant of Satan; yet no one forces him to sin. In choosing the evil and refusing the good, he acts according to his own corrupt inclination, and this renders his bondage peculiarly hopeless. A person might be put in chains, and yet some way of escape might present itself; but if he preferred bondage to liberty, if he were bent upon perpetuating his captivity, his case would be still more hopeless. Such is the state of fallen man; he is held in the cords of his sins, he prizes the wages of unrighteousness too highly to quit the service of the master whom he loves, and to whom his character is so closely assimilated. He is alienated from the life of God, through the darkness and ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his mind.

How can you,—said one to a person in a respectable situation of life,—bring upon yourself and your family so much misery, by indulging in intoxication? Were you ever ready to die with thirst? was the reply. I have been very thirsty. And you felt an inexpressible desire for water? Yes. Well, such is my desire for strong liquor, and I am unable to resist it.—Here we have at once free and forced action. The man followed his own inclination, he acted freely, yet he was the servant of sin, and no consideration of consequences in this world or the next could induce him to forego the gratification of his depraved appetite. So every man by nature is the *free*, the *willing* servant of sin and Satan.

Our author observes: "That our agency is voluntary notwithstanding the action of causes, we are sure is a

fact; but to make apparent the consistency of a system of causation with a system of voluntary action, is not therefore easy. In truth, this has been always the great problem of philosophy, and it is perhaps incapable of solution. Its being so, however, as it can create no practical perplexity, so it ought to occasion no surprise. It is evidently but a natural, and should not have been an unexpected result of the limited range of human faculties. It is not that the universe in this respect is out of joint, but that we are not at present in a position to perceive and appreciate the harmony of its parts. It is, in a word, that, being creatures, we cannot comprehend all that is intelligible to the Creator. It is a small exercise of modesty to be acquiescent under such an imperfection of our knowledge."*—P. 42.

This is precisely the point to which we wish to conduct Mr Hinton. If the problem be incapable of solution, why does he attempt to solve it? The difficulty does not altogether result from "the limited range of human faculties." In consequence of the fall this world "is out of joint," "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it," Psal. lxxv. 3. Jesus will continue to bear up its pillars till, from its ruins, he has gathered in his redeemed,—till he has done the will of God, in sanctifying those for whose sake he sanctified himself, John xvii. 19.; Heb. x. 10.; and this he effects by manifesting himself to

* This is one of various passages in Mr Hinton's book, which prove that he has not been able to satisfy himself of the soundness of his own argument. His illustration already noticed, that our own existence, or that of the material universe, cannot be proved by any train of reasoning, fully establishes this conclusion.

them in their successive generations, by means of the gospel, and then dwelling in their hearts by that faith which overcometh the world, 1 John v. 4.

In the conclusion of chapter fourth, we have a specimen of the metaphysical subtilties into which our author has been led by his attempts to establish a favourite theory. Whatever scope disquisitions on such subjects may afford for the display of acuteness, they are altogether foreign to the gospel of Christ.

He proceeds: "I may be reminded of the operations of divine grace on the heart; but I see nothing in them that needs to be differently explained. I know that God has chosen some to eternal life, and that the attainment of this happiness involves a change in them, which also, of course, he has predetermined to effect: but it is enough in this case that he should have fore-ordained *his own* doings, and not theirs. He regenerates them; very well—regeneration is strictly his work, and not theirs. He makes them willing in the day of his power: again I say, very well—here is an exertion of his own power, which of course he predetermined; and here is also a resulting course of voluntary action on their part, which, no doubt, he foresaw and calculated upon, but which it was neither appropriate nor necessary that he should foreordain."—P. 63.

"Voluntary action" is the necessary and inevitable consequence of regeneration, just as sensation or motion is the necessary consequence of animal life. If God predetermined to bestow life, he predetermined to bestow sensation, and if he predetermined to re-

generate any of the sons of men, he predetermined "a resulting course of voluntary action" on the part of the regenerate. The one was necessarily included in the other; they could not be separated, and hence the apostle says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, *which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*;" Eph. ii. 10. So much for Mr Hinton's assertion that it was "neither appropriate nor necessary that he should foreordain" "a resulting course of voluntary action on their part." The apostle affirms, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that God did foreordain the good works to the performance of which believers were created in Christ Jesus. Our author tells us God made them "willing in the day of his power." Willing to do what? Certainly to take upon them Christ's yoke; to walk in newness of life; and is not this synonymous with ordaining them so to walk, which, we are expressly informed, God has done? Thus he works in his people to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure. Mr Hinton admits that God "foreordained *his own* doings," and does not this inevitably include his people doing what he foreordained to work in them to do?

Mr Hinton sees neither necessity nor warrant for the idea "that God has foreordained the ungodly to perdition,"—p. 64. Is not the perdition of the ungodly the doing of God? 2 Thess. i. 9. Now, according to our author, God "hath foreordained *his own doings*." Known unto God are all his works, from the foundation of the world; he inhabits eternity; he does not, like us, look back to the past and forward to the future. According to our author, he

chose some to eternal life; and the scripture declares that those who are not thus chosen shall perish, while their blood will be upon their own head.

"We are called on," says our author, "to be reconciled to God, that is, to produce love towards God instead of enmity. Now the enmity we have hitherto felt towards God has been produced by ourselves; and, therefore, since we have been able to produce enmity, we must of course be able to produce love. And not only so; whatever amount of enmity we may have produced heretofore, it is plain that we are able to produce an equal amount of love; since it would be altogether groundless and absurd to suppose that we possess naturally a power of generating more of hatred than benevolence. Now to generate love as we have hitherto generated enmity, is the precise thing required of us when we are bidden to be reconciled to God; and, therefore, to be reconciled to him is within our power."—P. 69.

Man did not produce enmity against his Maker by "a process to which the mind is competent," but by an act of disobedience, and, consequently, coming under the curse of the law; therefore, unless man can deliver himself from the curse,—unless he can pay a ransom for his soul,—he cannot produce love to God. An atonement has been provided, but by far the greater part of mankind never heard of the only name given under heaven whereby men may be saved, and of those who have heard the gospel, Mr Hinton affirms, that none are saved but those who were chosen to eternal life, and regenerated, and made willing by divine power.

When our author states that to be reconciled to

God is within our power, he loses sight of the meaning of reconciliation as employed in scripture. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift;" Matt. v. 23, 24. Here, it is supposed, that we have given our brother some cause of complaint, and we are commanded to *be reconciled to him* by giving him satisfaction for the injury. When David proposed to go to battle with the army of the Philistines, the lords objected to it, and inquired, "Wherewith should he *reconcile* himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?" 1 Sam. xxix. 4. The word is used precisely in the same sense by the apostle: "For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the death of his Son; much more, being *reconciled*, we shall be saved by his life;" Rom. v. 10. Here, being reconciled to God by the death of his Son, is synonymous with being justified by his blood in the preceding verse. In the following verse, believers are described as joying in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the reconciliation, Rom. v. 11. The holy places and things were reconciled with blood, by which their pollution was removed. Messiah was to make reconciliation (or atonement) for iniquity, Dan. ix. 24., and sinners are besought to be reconciled to God from the consideration, that "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." We can only be reconciled to God by receiving the atonement, or reconciliation; and Mr Hinton tells us, that no man ever did or will do so,

except through the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only are those responsible who are favoured with revelation, but the heathen who have not the law are responsible; Rom. i. 20. Is it within their power to be reconciled to God? the apostle tells us, that "they are without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12.

Our author objects to the moral law being considered to constitute "a perfect inflexible standard," requiring "an absolute perfection of character, and the same perfection in all circumstances."—P. 69. He tells us, "that which the law of God requires is therefore rather a shifting than a fixed element," p. 70; and upon what is this hypothesis founded? "The precept," he tells us, "is, 'Love—with all thy strength;' and is certainly as pliable and accomodating as can be desired. God requires no less than our strength —why should he?—and clearly no more. We are, therefore, able to do all that he requires; since that is no more than to employ what means we have of producing a certain affection of the mind."—Pp. 70, 71.

Why then does the apostle deny that any law *could* have given life? Gal. iii. 21. Why does he affirm that we are naturally *without strength;* Rom. v. 6. How can he say that in him dwelleth no good thing, (Rom. vii. 18) if he naturally possessed means to produce love to God? To suppose God to require us to love him with more than all our strength, is absurd; "the law of the Lord is perfect," and, consequently, exactly adapted to the circumstances of those who are under it, but it demands absolute perfection. "He that offendeth in one point is guilty

of all. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." It is then "a fixed element," it demands the same of a man and of an angel, to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself; and our Lord, after expounding it in all its spirituality and extent, concludes by saying, "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48. The law, then, demands perfect conformity; it pronounces a curse on every deviation; and is, therefore, "a perfect and inflexible standard of rectitude, and requires an absolute perfection of character, and the same perfection in all circumstances."

CHAPTER VII.

Figures denoting the change produced in conversion: a new birth;—creation;—resurrection;—how reflection on divine truthwill operate;—object of the evangelical ministry;—gospel exhibits the most powerful motives;—natural results of Mr Hinton's system;—remarks on the case of the demoniacs.

Various figures are employed to denote the change which takes place upon a sinner when he is reconciled to God; for example, a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17. The apostle, in impressing upon the Ephesians that salvation was not of works, lest any man should boast, adds, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. Does, then, the creature produce itself? The supposition is absurd; its production is an act of creative power. We also read of a new birth being essential to our entering the kingdom of God. Surely the child is not the cause of its own birth! Another figure is a resurrection. We are, by nature, dead in sins, but believers are quickened together with Christ, and risen to walk with him in newness of life. Are the dead raised by their own exertions? certainly not. Now the apostle represents the exceeding greatness of God's power in quickening believers, as corresponding with the mighty power by which Christ's resurrection was effected; Eph. i. 20. God never employs means greater than are necessary for accomplishing his purposes Philosophers have noticed the economy of power in the works of nature, where the same agent is made use of to answer various

purposes. The use of greater means than the case requires, argues a deficiency of wisdom, as much as employing means which prove inadequate. We may then be assured that God, who is perfect in wisdom, always adapts the means to the end he has in view, and that he would not put forth his almighty power in quickening believers, were it not necessary.

Mr Hinton will reply, such language is to be understood figuratively and analogically, not literally ; but where is the analogy, if the most prominent part of the figure bears no relation to what is figured ?

Precisely by the same mode of reasoning, Arians and Socinians resist the testimony of the Word of God respecting our Lord's divinity. They admit that he is God, Jehovah, Almighty, &c. but only in an improper sense. "I see and know," says the Arian, "that the two sets of attributes, the divine and human, are perfectly incompatible," and therefore, by the help of figurative and analogical language, he gets rid of the testimony of the Word of God ; but this great and fundamental doctrine is placed in such a variety of points of view, that nothing but the natural opposition of the mind to God, could prevent our perceiving it, and the inability of fallen man to turn to God is not less plainly revealed

In answering the question, Whether, because men are fallen and depraved, religious truths will not affect them when reflected on ? Mr Hinton says, "I observe, first, that, if the effect of man's fall be to prevent truths of any class, when reflected on, from acting on his feelings according to their nature, then the fall has materially interfered with the operation of his rational faculties, and must be deemed to have

impaired the structure of his mind. In such a state men are no longer sane; and, on every principle of equity, they should be exempted from religious obligation and responsibility altogether."—P. 77.

I shall not inquire whether the fall has interfered with the operation of men's rational faculties, but in consequence of his rebellion, he is cut off from God by the curse of his broken law, and is, therefore, so corrupt and alienated from God, that when he hears the gospel which contains the fullest display of the Divine character, the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Whether our author holds that the fall of the angels "impaired the structure" of their "mind," I cannot tell, but at all events, I hardly suppose he will maintain that, on every principle of equity, they should be exempted from religious obligation and responsibility altogether. Of one thing we are sure, that the old serpent, the devil and Satan, was not thus exempted, for God cursed him for tempting our first parents, and ever since that time he has been treasuring up for himself wrath against the day of wrath.

Mr Hinton speaks, with great confidence, of the importance of reflection upon religious truth,—a position which we have no wish to controvert, although the connexion between the apprehensions of condemnation and turning to God is by no means uniform. He says, "that religious truth, *when reflected on,* will operate on the minds of men, without any exception." —P 79.

Undoubtedly; but how will it operate? It never produces conversion, himself being judge. Reflection, however, may produce terror or transient joy. Sometimes it produces infidelity, or leads men

to seek for refuge in a Church professing infallibility. At other times, it produces insanity, and hence we see the people of the world filled with apprehensions, when any of their relations begin to reflect much upon religion. Still men are to be urged to reflect upon the circumstances in which they are placed, and the way of salvation is to be pressed upon their consideration, while we remember that it is God's exclusive prerogative to make the truth effectual to their salvation.

No doubt, men frequently endeavour to turn away their mind from the account which their conscience, as well as the Word of God, tells them they are to give hereafter. They are not absolutely without feeling, in regard to religion, but our author agrees with us, that none of them ever did or will turn to God, except through the Holy Spirit; and consequently, so far as the question is practical, himself hath decided it. From this difficulty he attempts to escape, by distinguishing between sufficient and efficient or effectual. The motives held out to turn men to God, he alleges, are *sufficient*, although they never were and never will be *effectual*. But the means which God employs are effectual for accomplishing his eternal purpose in the salvation of his redeemed people.

He has commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature, and has declared, that "as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not re-

turn unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," Isaiah lv. 10, 11. To the heirs of promise, the children given to Christ, those for whose sake he sanctified himself, John xvii. 19, the gospel is the savour of life unto life, for it comes to them in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, while to others it comes only in word, and is the savour of death unto death. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the exclusive privilege of the children of the new covenant; by one spirit they are all baptised into one body, and thus become the members of Christ, Eph. v. 30. By this spirit they are made alive to God, while all who have not the Spirit are dead while they live.

In this consists the great difference between the old and new covenants. The old covenant said, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" but it did not give the strength which was requisite, in order to obedience. Hence the ministry of Moses is termed the ministration of death and of condemnation; and hence the apostle tells us, the first covenant was not faultless, Heb. viii. 7. But the Lord puts his fear in the inward parts of the children of the new covenant, and the law is written in their hearts. Thus does the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus make them free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2.

"Besides," observes Mr Hinton, p. 78, "upon the supposition I am combating, how unintelligible, how absurd, is the entire system of the evangelical ministry! The scriptures exhibit it as adapted to persuade men. Herein God speaks to them, and bids them hearken and incline their ear, as being about

to say things which, if they will hearken to them, will exert an influence on their minds. But we are now told, that, although men should hearken to divine pleadings, they will exert no influence? Where then is the use of demanding their attention, and of complaining so bitterly that it is withheld? It is henceforth nothing more than an artifice and a mockery."

This paragraph gives a very false view of "the entire system of the evangelical ministry." The apostle certainly well understood the object of the ministry which was committed to him immediately by the Lord. Now, he informs us, that the object of the evangelical ministry is to gather in the elect. "I endure all things for the *elect's* sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," 2 Tim. ii. 10. The warnings, the invitations, the entreaties, are all for their sakes, and they are effectual, so that none of them are lost. The Lord Jesus has received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given; and while others reject the counsel of God against themselves, because they are not his sheep, John x. 26, he says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John x. 27, 28. Hence the apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians by the gospel coming to them not in word, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5.

By whom has our author been told, "that although men should hearken to divine pleadings, they will

exert no influence?" The language of scripture is, "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live;" but it also testifies that, "as the deaf adder will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, men will not hearken to the gracious invitations of the gospel, nay, that such is their depravity, that they cannot come to Christ, except the Father draw them," John vi. 44, 65. Mr Hinton smiles at this "*cannot-ism*, but admits, that no man ever did or will come, except through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The gospel presents the most powerful motives to induce men to flee from the wrath to come, and opens to all who hear it, without exception, a door of hope, however aggravated their guilt. Every bar is removed out of the way of those who possess the sacred oracles. They are warned of their danger, and invited to enter the ark. What could have been done more for sinners of mankind, who possess the Word of God? Nothing in the way of external advantages. But no evidence will remove their unbelief; "they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be pursuaded although one rose from the dead."

The scriptures "teach us, it is true," says our author, "that man is a fallen and depraved creature, and that his depravity gravely influences his treatment of religious truth: what they declare upon this point, however, is not that religious truth meditated on will not affect men's minds, but that men will not meditate on it. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They will not hearken, or incline their ear to instruction. This sentiment, I must beg to observe, is widely different from the other, and, so

far from sanctioning it, accords altogether with that for which I am contending—namely, that religious truth, *when reflected on*, will operate on the minds of men, without any exception."—P. 79.

Well, here is an insuperable bar, " they will not hearken, or incline their ear to instruction." Now, their minds cannot be affected unless this disinclination be overcome; so that our author is shut up to admit the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit in order to conviction. What avails it that religious truth, *when reflected on*, will operate on the minds of men, when it is admitted in the same breath, that " men will not meditate" on religious truth. But he wishes to prove that men are inexcusable when they reject the gospel; it is freely admitted. Mr Hinton may suppose that he has solved " the great problem of philosophy;" but he resembles the boy who, by repeating a rule, persuaded himself that he understood a subject, of which he was ignorant.

He informs us his views are not peculiar to himself, " but are entertained widely," p. 100. It may be so; and, according to his anticipations, they may be destined to a far more extensive prevalence. But without pretending to the spirit of prophecy, we may confidently predict that a great proportion of those who adopt them will carry them farther than our author. They will see that, while the operation of the Spirit is held to be essential to conversion, they do not get free of any practical difficulty, and will therefore proceed to deny the necessity of his influence altogether; and if, in consequence, they depart farther from the truth than their leader, they will at the same time produce a system more agree-

able to the wisdom of this world, by following to their legitimate consequences the premises with which they have been furnished.

We consider our author's system to have had an unhappy influence upon his mind, in leading him to explain away various passages of the word of God, to which we have adverted; and in this we see the importance of the caution against Christians being spoiled "by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." How is this apostolic caution to be reconciled with our author's observation, when treating of human depravity, and its consequences, that "the decision of the religious argument is involved in the principles of moral philosophy."*

Whatever may be the further effects of his system upon himself, we have no doubt of its being very injurious to others. Error in regard to any part of divine truth will eat as doth a canker. Its full operation may in some cases be neutralized, but its tendency is always pernicious.

There are various other passages of our author's work which we might have noticed, but what has been said will give a sufficiently accurate view of his system, and of the fallacious arguments by which it is defended.

There is still one thing, however, to which we will advert. From the manner in which Mr Hinton has expressed himself, it seems doubtful whether he holds that the demoniacs of whom we read in the New Testament were actually possessed. In representing our acting independently as essential to our responsibility, he says: "I intend that the actions for

* The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion, p. 77. London, 1830.

which we are held responsible should be our own, and not another's; not such, for example, as those of the ancient demoniacs (I assume, for the value of the illustration, the literal import of the narrative), in and by whom the evil spirits spake and wrought." Pp. 7, 8.

If the accounts of the demoniacs are not to be understood literally, we may explain away any fact recorded in scripture. Not only are persons possessed of evil spirits distinguished from lunatics; not only does the Lord command the spirit to hold his peace and come out, Mark i. 25, v. 8; but on one occasion, some of these evil spirits obtained permission to enter into a herd of swine, of which three thousand were in consequence drowned. If in this case there was not a real possession, by what figure can the narrative be reconciled with truth? This part of scripture history is very important; for it embodies the doctrine of the power and malice of the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. In the demoniacs we see an exhibition of the activity of our adversary the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We also see in the destruction of the herd of swine the restraints which God places upon the power of Satan, who, had he been permitted, would have destroyed the demoniacs. In like manner, we see the truth of the indwelling of the Spirit in believers, embodied in his visible descent on the day of pentecost, and in the consequent miraculous gifts conferred on the disciples in the beginning of the gospel. If Mr Hinton does hold the literal import of the narrative of the demoniacs, he should not have cast a doubt on it by his parenthesis

CHAPTER VIII.

Erroneous view of the state of fallen man, the foundation of Mr Hinton's system;—man has no claim upon God;—all children of wrath;—our connexion with Adam, and the imputation of his sin, and of the righteousness of Christ;—separation of soul and body, not the death threatened Gen. ii. 17;—gospel not an experiment;—redemption not an after thought;—Satan's plan defeated, and through it God's eternal purpose fulfilled;—display of the glory of the Divine character.

Having taken a general view of the system which Mr Hinton has endeavoured to establish, and of the arguments by which it is supported, it may not be unprofitable to consider more particularly the foundation upon which it rests. Our author has adopted an erroneous view of the state into which man was brought by the fall. While he admits human depravity, he entertains very erroneous conceptions of its origin, its depth, and its consequences. He tells us that man's "depravity gravely influences his treatment of religious truth," p. 79; while the scriptures teach us that man is so blinded by his depravity, that nothing short of Almighty power can overcome his hatred of the light. "Truth," he says, "naturally approves itself to the understanding, rather than error; and, when fairly presented (which of course is implied in the statement), has not only the better chance, but the certainty of being received, if the action of the understanding be not perverted, as by prejudice or passion."—P. 90. The scriptures not only represent the action of the understanding as perverted, but declare that the prejudice is so deep,

and the passion so strong, that God alone is able to subdue it. This, indeed, Mr Hinton practically admits, for he holds that the power of the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary to conversion. We need not, then, sit down to calculate *chances*, as to the reception of the truth, since, according to our author himself, no man who ever lived, or shall live, has received, or will receive, the truth as it is in Jesus, without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fallen man is not only depraved but condemned, and the former is the effect of the latter. By the curse, he is cut off from God, the Fountain of all purity and holiness. Hence that depravity which our author acknowledges, while he appears to overlook its source. That all mankind were not for ever cast off, can only be referred to the sovereign pleasure of God. Fallen man had no more claim upon his Creator than the fallen angels ; it is of the Lord's mercy that any of Adam's race escape everlasting destruction. It was not, however, the purpose of God to restore all mankind to his love and favour. This is incontrovertibly proved by the result, for in this, as in everything else, God's purpose has stood, and he has done all his pleasure.

Mr Hinton holds that God has chosen some to eternal life, whom he regenerates and makes willing in the day of his power, the result of which is "a course of voluntary action on their part;" but he does not hold that "God has foreordained the ungodly to perdition," p. 64. According to the scriptures, fallen man is "lost," he is "condemned already," and such as are not regenerated, or created anew, must, therefore, inevitably perish, for the

"wrath of God abideth on them." All sinned and died in Adam; hence all are dead in trespasses and sins. By the riches of God's grace many are plucked as brands from the burning, while others are left to perish. All are by nature accursed,—the "children of wrath,"—and the salvation of the redeemed is the wonder of angels; 1 Pet. i. 12.

The most fruitful source of error, in regard to the gospel, is, not properly understanding our fall in Adam. "The occasion," says Dr Owen, "of all the mistakes and errors that have been about regeneration, either of old or of late, has been a misunderstanding of the true state of men in their lapsed condition, or of nature as depraved." That, in virtue of the relation in which we stand to our first father, his guilt is our guilt, and that we were all most justly condemned in him, is a stumbling-block and foolishness to all whose high imaginations are not cast down by the gospel coming to them in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Against this doctrine the pride of the human heart rises, although it is not only plainly taught in the scriptures of truth, but is confirmed by what is daily passing around us. We see death reigning over infants who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Now, death is the wages of sin; and if infants were not sinners, they would not be subject to death. "Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" Job iv. 7.

There is another circumstance which, were it not explained by what is continually passing around us, would be no less mysterious than the imputation of

Adam's guilt to his posterity. That the unnumbered millions of the human race should have been created in an individual, would appear incredible; but the birth of children removes the difficulty. And, in regard to the imputation of Adam's guilt to all mankind, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God is approaching, when we shall see that in this and every other part of his procedure, the Lord hath acted with infinite wisdom and unimpeachable justice.

The imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, and the imputation of the Second Adam's righteousness to his children, are written as with a sunbeam in the Word of God, and the knowledge of this is indispensable to our understanding the plan of redemption. It is from losing sight of this fundamental truth that so many winds of doctrine are abroad, by which the hearts of the simple are deceived.

Many hold, most inconsistently, that we partake of the consequences, but not of the guilt of Adam's sin; which is palpably unscriptural. "By one man's disobedience many were made SINNERS;"—and there is the most perfect harmony between the introduction of sin and righteousness: "Even so, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. Such is the unity between Christ and his people, in consequence of his having taken part in flesh and blood with the children whom God had given him, that their sin is truly his sin, and his righteousness is truly theirs.

The view given in the Word of God is, that all men sinned in Adam, and so came under the curse.

Like the angels, they were delivered into chains of darkness; and the reason why these chains are not everlasting, is, that God said,—of those whom he loved with an everlasting love, and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,—"deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." In the course of his adorable providence, he brings them under the sound of the gospel, which, through his power, is to them spirit and life. They receive the atonement, are by one spirit baptised into the one body of Christ, and, after having suffered awhile, after having fellowship with their glorious Head in the sorrows which he endured in this world, they have fellowship with him in his death, that they may be conformed to him in his resurrection, and be raised spiritual and incorruptible, having their vile bodies fashioned like to his glorious body.

While in this world, they are not in darkness; God is the Lord who hath showed them light; Christ, their sacrifice, has been bound to the horns of the altar, Psal. cxviii. 27. "I am, (saith Christ,) the light of the world." It streams from his cross, where he finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Having risen for the justification of those whose sins he had borne, he saluted his brethren with the joyful annunciation: "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." He was given for a covenant of the people, Isa. xlix. 8., and the covenant having now been confirmed by his death and resurrection, he has removed from his redeemed the spirit of bondage unto fear, and given them the spirit of adoption, by which they cry,

Abba, Father, and, consequently, have the witness of the Spirit that they are the children of God, through union with the Only-begotten.

The heirs of promise had from the beginning been justified by the righteousness of Christ,—who is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. But this righteousness was not brought in till his death, burial, and resurrection. Till then the atonement was not made; but "through the forbearance of God," his people in every age were accepted in the beloved. The spirits of just men were then "made perfect," Heb. xii. 23; and believers upon earth now walk in a clearer light.

It may be asked, if mankind were condemned in Adam, why were they placed under the law? The law, like every other part of God's dealings with fallen man, was given in reference to the coming of the Saviour; hence he is said to be the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. The law makes no allowance for human frailty, it demands perfect obedience, and pronounces a curse upon every deviation, thus exhibiting God's abhorrence of sin, and the absolute necessity of a perfect righteousness in order to our acceptance with God. The law was added, not that by it sinners might be justified, but that the offence might abound, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19; and that, being fulfilled by the great Surety of the new covenant, it might be written in the hearts of all his children by the Spirit received through faith in him. No law could by possibility have given life to fallen man, Gal. iii. 21. In order to salvation, sinners must be redeemed from

the curse, and created anew in Christ. This redemption was effected upon Calvary. There God purchased the Church with his own blood, and in the day of regeneration he takes possession of his purchase. He manifests himself to his people as he does not to the world, and they become the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in them, which they have of God. Thus, that fellowship with their Creator, which was broken off by sin, is renewed by their union with the Son of God, and the consequence of this union is their bringing forth the fruits of righteousness; Rom. vii. 4. As their ungodliness and worldly lusts, in their natural state, were the proof of their guilt, condemnation, and consequent alienation from God; so the fruits of the spirit of Christ, who dwells in their heart by faith, are now the evidence of their justification, and of their having passed from death unto life; 1 John iii. 7.

It appears, from our author's work upon the Holy Spirit, that he considers the death with which Adam was threatened in the event of disobedience, (Gen. ii. 17,) to have been the separation of soul and body. This is by no means the case. The destruction of the human body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, is, indeed, a lively emblem of both soul and body being destroyed in hell; but still it is but an emblem —a type of the wrath to come. The death threatened, Gen. ii. 17, was destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. This is the death which Christ has abolished, 2 Tim. i. 10. Hence he says, "If a man keep my saying, he shall *never see death*," John viii. 51; and again, "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die*,"

John xi. 26. Now, faith in Christ, while it secures us us against death, does not prevent our going down to the grave. Fallen man's returning to the dust from which he was taken, was appointed in connexion with the intimation of the coming of the Saviour. This connexion is clearly pointed out, Heb. ix. 27, 28. "It is appointed for men once to die, and after death the judgment," in exact correspondence with the Divine purpose, that Christ should be once offered to bear the sins of many, and appear the second time to them that look for him "without sin unto salvation."

Mr Hinton represents man in this world as in a state of probation. In one sense, men may be said to be in a state of probation, for now is the seed-time, and eternity is the harvest; but, strictly speaking, when Adam rebelled, the probation of man came to an end; he was lost and condemned: but a ransom was provided for an innumerable multitude whom God had chosen in Christ before the world began, having predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son, and to become the children of the second Adam—the Lord from heaven—the head of the new creation.

Our author terms the gospel an "experiment;" but it was no experiment. Before the building was begun, the great Architect had counted the cost, provided the materials, and knew he had sufficient to finish it. The structure in all its grandeur, its beauty, and its perfection, was present to his view. The foundation and chief corner-stone was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;" and the form and size of every stone in the building, with the particular place it was to oc-

cupy, was fixed and determined. If we change the figure, and contemplate the Son of God as the great Head of his body the Church, we hear him thus addressing his Father: "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them," Psal. cxxxix. 16.

Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, and he will present it faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. For this purpose all power in heaven and in earth is committed to him. The gospel which he hath sent out of Zion, is the rod of his power, with which he subdues his people to the obedience of faith; and while many reject the counsel of God against themselves, Christ's sheep *shall* hear his voice, John x. 16. For their sakes the world is preserved, and when the last of them shall be gathered into the fold, he will appear to receive them in one body to himself; and then shall the heavens and the earth which now are, flee away from his presence, and give place to the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The mystery of God will then be finished,—the Divine glory will shine forth without an interposing cloud, and all God's obedient and intelligent creation will with rapture exclaim, "Great and marvellous are all thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints."

We are not taught to view the plan of redemption as an after thought, an expedient to remedy an unexpected calamity. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." It was

his eternal purpose to make known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places his manifold wisdom, by the Church redeemed with the blood of his only-begotten Son, Eph. iii. 10, 11. The universe was created by and for Jesus, as a theatre for the manifestation of his glory, 1 Col. i. 16. In reference to this manifestation, mankind were created in Adam, who was the figure of Him who was to come, Rom. v. 14; while Eve, made of his flesh and bones, was the type of the Church, the Lamb's wife, Eph. v. 31, 32.

Not only were mankind created in Adam, but in him they sinned, and came under the curse. Hence all are *by nature* the children of wrath; "the wrath of God abideth" on them; and none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. But the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil; he appeared as the second Adam, the Head of his body the Church. In this character he restored what he took not away, magnifying the law, and making it honourable; for his was the obedience of the lawgiver, in the form of a servant. The Lord laid (or made to meet) upon him the iniquity of all his people, and he buried them in his grave, never more to see the light. But in order to the justification of the redeemed, it was not only necessary that their sins should be pardoned, but that God the Judge of all should pronounce them righteous. This he has virtually done, in raising his Son from the dead, and giving him glory; and they shall all stand before his tribunal, in the spotless robe of their Redeemer's righteousness, which surpasses the righteousness of the first

man in his best estate, as far as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, is superior to him who was of the earth earthy.

Thus out of the eater has come forth meat; "God created Adam in his own image, giving him dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth;" a type of the universal dominion which He who was to come, and of whom Adam was the figure, should possess.* Satan scorned to be placed in subjection to the descendant of a creature made of the dust, and determined, if possible, to blast the fair creation which had sprung into existence at the command of the Eternal. He knew that Jehovah was a God of truth, that he was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; that judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne; and concluded that, if he could prevail upon man to disobey, the perfection of the Divine character would render his restoration impossible, and consequently prevent his decendant, the Son of man, from being exalted to universal dominion. But there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord; Satan fell into the snare which he had laid, and the success of his plan was the very means of accomplishing the Divine purpose. True, he brought mankind under the curse; he became, by right of conquest, the god of this world, and leads its inhabitants captive at his will; but this only prepared the way for the Head of the new creation bruising Satan under his feet, and making all the seed of the woman, whom he is not ashamed to

* That such was the case, we learn from the Apostle's comment upon the 8th Psalm; see Heb. ii. 6—9.

call brethren, partakers of his victory, Rom. xvi. 20. As their covenant Head and Surety, Heb. vii. 22, he answered all the demands of the law which they had broken; he endured its penalty; nor did he faint nor was discouraged, till he had set righteousness on the earth. He proclaimed, with his dying breath, that the work which he had undertaken was accomplished; and the voice was re-echoed from the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, when the God of peace brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, "and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 21—23.

Such is the view of the plan of redemption given in the scriptures. In it are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It is the chief of the ways of God, the grandest manifestation of the Divine character. Here we see "mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other." We behold "the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, while he will in no wise clear the guilty." Moses, to whom Jehovah proclaimed this glorious name, could not see his face, Exod. xxxiii. 20.; but the darkness is past, the true light

now shineth, and, in the unveiled face of Jesus Christ, "we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory," as by the Spirit of the Lord. Moses saw—in the blood with which almost all things were purged, and without which there was no remission—the necessity of a greater sacrifice; but we can look directly to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and listen to the intercession which, as a priest upon his throne, he ever lives to make for us. He is the true mercy-seat, upon which is enthroned our covenant God, whom we can at once view as the just God, and the justifier of the ungodly.

PART II.

ATONEMENT OF CHRIST,

AND THE

WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

CHAPTER I.

Mr Hinton's anticipation of success;—progress of his sentiments;—dangerous tendency of error in religion;—Mr Hall's opinion of Mr Hinton's Works.

Ten years ago, Mr Hinton's volume upon the Work of the Spirit made its appearance. Towards the conclusion we are told, "If it were of any importance, however, (and to the writer it is certainly matter of gratification,) it might be stated, that in this sentiment he is far from being alone. He has reason to believe that not a few of the most able and most useful ministers of the gospel, in various denominations, mainly, if not entirely agree with him; and that the same sentiments are entertained by many judicious Christians in private life, who are longing to see their teachers escape from the loosening bonds. He has a cheering confidence that the bonds are loosening, and is sorry that any worthy men should identify themselves with a falling system."—P. 293.

Considering the situation occupied by Mr Hinton in the denomination with which he is connected, it

could hardly have been anticipated that he should stand alone while attempting to remove the offence of the cross, by exhibiting the gospel in a form in some respects more agreeable to men's natural apprehensions. In consequence of the opposition of the wisdom of this world to the wisdom of God, we are constantly prone to corrupt the truth as it is in Jesus. In every age, the burning bush has been the appropriate emblem of the Church of Christ; and the only reason of its not being consumed is, that the Lord is there. He declared that the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church; and, notwithstanding all the assaults to which it has been exposed from without, and the still more dangerous attacks from within, the Lord still has a seed to serve him, and to the end of the world the children of his servants shall continue, and their seed be established before him.

When in one particular we depart from "the simplicity that is in Christ," we are almost unavoidably led further into error. It has been maintained that "there exists so intimate a principle of connexion among all the objects of the physical universe, that if one particle of matter were annihilated, the mechanism and movement of the whole must be deranged." Whatever there may be in this, it is certain that a false view of any one part of the doctrine of Christ tends to obscure our views of the whole. It is like entering upon a bye-path which diverges more and more from the king's highway.

While Mr Hinton maintained man's ability to turn to God, he at the same time held that no man ever did or will receive the love of the truth, except

by the power of the Holy Spirit. This system was palpably deficient; he might, indeed, please himself with the consideration that he had placed human responsibility on a firmer basis, and might cherish, with parental affection, the metaphysical subtilties by which he had satisfied himself of the truth of his hypothesis, but it was not to be expected that others would stop short at the same point. Admitting the justness of his reasoning, it led to no practical result; every man who believed the Scriptures, or who attended to what was passing in his own mind, was already fully aware of his responsibility; so that unless the system was carried farther, it was a mere speculation.

It was said that few had adopted Mr Hinton's views; and some alleged, as a reason for not looking into his works, that the late Robert Hall, with all his admitted ability and penetration, had declared himself unable to comprehend them. Considering, however, that error in religion is so congenial to the human mind, it was to be expected that Mr Hinton's sentiments would be made the basis of a still greater departure from the truth. Accordingly, in the Circular Letter of the Baptist Churches of the Midland Association, dated May 22nd and 23rd, 1839, we find the *inherent efficacy of the instituted means*, independently of any *extraneous and supernatural agency*, boldly maintained.

After the greater part of the preceding pages were written, this letter came into my hands, and an examination of the doctrine which it contains will tend to confirm the observations already offered upon the unscriptural nature of Mr Hinton's system.

CHAPTER II.

General and Particular Baptists;—Midland Association;—unscriptural view of the atonement;—first intimation of mercy, why given in the form of a curse;—the first parable;—mankind divided into two families;—the attempt to unite them the cause of the flood;—separation again made in Noah's family;—why favour shown to the family from which Christ was to spring.

Baptists in England have long been divided into General and Particular, or Arminian and Calvinistic. The latter derive their name from holding the doctrine of particular redemption, or of Christ having laid down his life for his sheep; while the General Baptists hold that he died for every child of Adam. The Circular now before us, signed by the representatives of thirty-six Particular Baptist Churches, treats particular redemption as an exploded error. Upon this subject we shall quote the paragraph immediately following the introduction.

"Bear with us, beloved, when we express a serious doubt, whether the Christian Church generally, and our denomination particularly, has hitherto formed a just estimate of the vast importance and *inherent efficacy*, which the external, and divinely instituted means of salvation, claim and hold in the great economy of human redemption developed in the gospel. Yet, thankfully be it acknowledged, that to set *bounds* to the extent of the grand restitution effected by the blood-shedding of Christ, and to survey it under the *mean* and *mercenary* notion of a private pecuniary and arithmetical compensation, and not as a public

satisfaction, designed to honour the demands of moral government, in providing for the relief of mankind indiscriminately, is *now* become too *gross* and *absurd* to be entertained. So long as the Church was willing to move and act in a most *cramped* and *narrow* sphere, and with little or no solicitude, *allow* a world lying in wickedness at home and abroad, to rush headlong to everlasting perdition, the doctrine of a *limited* provision, commensurate to the need, and requisite for the present and future well-being of a *favoured few only*, was a LUXURY of no ordinary enjoyment. True, Christ and his cross was then a theme of infinite moment and delectation, as they always ought to be regarded. But, that 'he died for ALL,' that 'he gave himself a ransom for ALL,' 'that he by the grace of God tasted death for every man;' and that 'he is the propitiation for the sins of the *whole* world,' were scripture representations to be hastily passed over; and if dwelt upon at all, to be visited with a *tortuous* interpretation. Your lot, however, is cast in days *more luminous* and *happy*. You have discovered, and stand fully convinced, that the death of Christ was a public transaction, intended to avert a public calamity, by making amends to public justice, that ample means might be obtained for the honourable acquittal, even of every one who cordially believes in Jesus."—P. 14.

Thus the great scripture doctrine, of Christ having loved the Church, and given "himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," Eph. v. 26, 27, is represented

as a "*mean* and *mercenary* notion of a private pecuniary and arithmetical compensation."

We have here an instance how little men naturally value the authority of the word of God, except when it coincides with their previous conceptions. What do the authors of the Circular think of the name given to the people of God? They are exclusively termed the *redeemed*—the *ransomed* of the Lord. Nay, the apostle repeatedly reminds the Corinthian believers that they are *bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20.; vii. 23. God hath *purchased* the Church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28, and hence it is termed the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. Yet the writers of the Circular are not ashamed to call this glorious display of the Divine wisdom and goodness, this "wisdom of God in a mystery," a "mean and mercenary notion of a private pecuniary and arithmetical compensation."

Language similar to that of the Circular has, for some time, been prevalent in certain quarters, and is sanctioned by the authority of the late Mr Irving, to whom it is in a great measure indebted for its popularity.* The representation of sin under the name of debt, is not unfrequent in the word of God, although there is a wide difference between owing a sum of money, and a violation of the moral law. In the

* "If he (Christ) was not, (a sinner) and God treated him as if he had been so, if that is the meaning of their imputation and substitution, or by whatever name they call it, away with it, away with it from my theology for ever, for it makes my God a God of *make-believes*, and not of truths."—*Irvine's Orthodox Doctrine*, p. 115.

Again, "this doctrine (the atonement) hath swallowed up almost every other doctrine, and become the great indulgence of ignorance and idleness, which, in a selfish age, will ever be the case.—*Fast-day Sermon*," 1828.

former case, if we can produce a friend who is able and willing to discharge our debt, we may boldly demand our discharge; in the latter, we must ourselves endure the penalty. Among men, even a voluntary substitute is inadmissible; the crime must either be passed over, or the criminal must suffer.

But God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts. The plan of salvation is not submitted to our judgment, but is authoritatively made known by Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being, as the wisdom and power of God, and we are commanded to receive it as little children. He tells us, that in the fulness of time he sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, which man had broken; and that by yielding it all the obedience it demanded, as well as enduring its penalty, he magnified and made it honourable, and thus brought in everlasting righteousness. Whether this righteousness should extend to the whole human race, or only to a part, depended entirely on the sovereign pleasure of the Almighty. Mankind had no claim whatsoever upon God. Eternal life through Jesus is his gift, and he does those from whom he withholds it no wrong. A Saviour being provided for any of the lost children of Adam, was an act of pure grace, and therefore the extent of this salvation depends wholly on Him "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will."

But the present question is not about the extent of salvation; it is admitted upon both sides, "that he who believeth and is baptised shall be saved, while

he who believeth not shall be damned. The question is, Whether the death of Christ is effectual for the salvation of all for whom he died; or, whether the far greater part of those whose sins he bore in his own body upon the tree, receive no ultimate benefit from this stupendous act of condescension? The bare statement of the question might appear to be sufficient. But according to the Circular, God purchasing the Church with his own blood, and not designing to provide "for the relief of mankind indiscriminately, is now become too gross and absurd to be entertained." To us the absurdity appears to lie upon the other side; but we are fully aware that the question is not to be decided by our preconceived notions, but by the revelation which God has been pleased to put into our hands, by which he declares he will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

The first intimation of the coming of the Saviour was given, not in the form of a promise to Adam, but of a curse upon Satan, Gen. iii. 15. The reason is obvious; God could hold no friendly intercourse with, nor make any promise to, fallen man, previous to the revelation of the Mediator, (2 Cor. i. 20.) and this revelation was given in the curse. The seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent, while his own heel was to be bruised in the contest. The apostle interprets this parable: "By death (the bruising of his heel) Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, (here is the bruising of the serpent's head) that (by abolishing death, through his own death) he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime

subject to bondage;" Heb. ii. 14. Hence, when our Lord was about to lay down his life, he said, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men after me; this spake he, signifying what death he should die;" John xii. 31, 33.

Coeval with the announcement of God's purposes of mercy, it was intimated that the salvation was not to be universal. Mankind were divided into two families; at the head of the one was placed the Son of Man, the seed of the woman. We may apply to the word *seed* in this passage the apostle's observation upon the same word on another occasion, "he saith not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." The Son of the virgin is eminently the seed of the woman, but as "both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one," Heb. ii. 11. of him the whole family are named, Eph. iii. 15. He is the first born of many brethren, who, in virtue of their union with him, shall share his victory, and sit down with him upon his throne. At the head of the other family is the old serpent, the devil, and Satan; and in every age it has been by far the most numerous. Indeed, all are by nature members of this family; all were condemned in Adam; but the children of the Second Adam, who is "a quickening spirit," are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Had it so pleased God, no doubt the whole human race might have been saved through the atonement, but only a part were to obtain salvation. If all had been saved, it would have given countenance to

the supposition, that fallen man had some claim upon God, that there was some hardship connected with his being brought under condemnation, not by his individual transgression, but by that of Adam; and thus the riches of the grace of God would have been tarnished. This cavil, however, is completely cut off, for only Christ's little flock are redeemed from that condemnation in which all were involved. Thus, too, we see a glorious illustration of God's peculiar love and kindness to his people whom he takes from the mass of mankind, and, through union with his only-begotten Son, adopts into his family, making them heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

The seed of the woman,—the brethren of Christ,—were not to be distinguished from the seed of the serpent by worldly prosperity; here "all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath;" Eccl. ix. 2. "All are born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward," and all return to the dust, in order to their final separation at the general judgment which was intimated from the beginning, by the division of mankind into two families, while it was indiscriminately appointed for all once to die. Consequently, the separation must take place beyond the grave.

The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent were embodied in Cain and Abel, the first of Adam's children of whom we read. Cain was of the wicked one, (he was the seed of the serpent) and slew his

brother; on account of which he was cursed, and driven out from the presence of the Lord. The curse not only fell upon him, but upon his family; and their dwelling in a state of separation from the children of Seth was a standing evidence of the division of mankind into two families, which we have seen was announced immediately after the fall. It is very remarkable that the attempt to put an end to this separation was the cause of the flood, Gen. vi. 1, 2, 3, and, indeed, this has been the chief ground of controversy between God and his people in every age.

As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, God did not destroy all mankind. Noah, the progenitor of Christ found grace in his sight, and he, with his family, were saved in the ark, a type of the great salvation, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21; Heb. xi. 7; soon afterwards another separation was made. Ham, on account of his undutifulness, was cursed; the curse extended to his family, and is in operation to the present day. At the same time Shem, from whom Christ was to spring, obtained the blessing, which Japhet was to share, by being persuaded to dwell in his brother's tents; just as the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles, by their being admitted into his family; Gal. iii. 14, 29.

Still men were not disposed to acquiesce in the Divine appointment; they began to build a city and a tower, "lest they should be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," in consequence of which God confounded their language, so that they did not understand each others speech, "and they left off

building the city, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

Thus we see that the separation of mankind into two families, proving that redemption was not to be universal, was revealed in connexion with the intimation of the coming of the Saviour. We also see that the family from which he was to spring was blessed, while the family from which he was not to spring was cursed. Individuals of the former family might be wicked, and individuals of the latter family might be righteous, but as a shadow, or emblem, the one family was blessed, and the other cursed; and thus we are figuratively taught that every spiritual and heavenly blessing is communicated only through our relation to Christ, Eph. i. 3; in whom all the promises to fallen man are yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. When Enos, the son of Seth, (whom God gave to Eve instead of Abel,) was born, men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord; and hence the children of Seth are described as the sons of God, in opposition to Cain's children, called the daughters of men, Gen. vi. 2.

CHAPTER III.

The call of Abraham ;—who served other gods ;—his covenant ;—bondage and deliverance of his posterity ;—their separation ;—shadows vanished at Christ's appearance ;—why the way to life narrow ;—election the cause of salvation ;—arguments for universal redemption considered ;—the gospel the fan in Christ's hand.

The same truth was still more remarkably exhibited in God's dealings with Abraham. The Saviour was first described as the seed of the woman ; soon after the flood, Jehovah revealed himself as the Lord God of Shem, intimating that Christ should be his descendant ; but a fuller and more explicit revelation was made to Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, Gen. xii. 3.

It appears that shortly after the flood, idolatry very generally prevailed. Abram and his family served other gods ; Joshua xxiv. 2, 15. This does not imply that they had changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, or to birds, or to fourfooted beasts, or to creeping things, but they did not view God through the only medium in which he can be seen by fallen man. The apostle, speaking of the lords many and gods many of the heathen, says, "But to us (believers) there is one God, the *Father*." Another apostle says, "If ye call on the *Father*." The apostle John says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God ; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son," 2 John 9 ; and again, "And we know

that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." 1 John v. 20, 21. The Lord tells us, that no man knoweth the *Father* but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Hence he calls himself the light of the world; all the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which has been in this benighted world since the fall has proceeded from him "of whom God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began;" and all who have lost sight of him that was to come, the seed of the woman, the suffering yet victorious Saviour, have worshipped they knew not what,—they served "other gods." When Jacob and Laban made a covenant, the latter said, "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us; but Jacob sware by the Fear of his father Isaac;" Gen. xxxi. 53. Laban swore by the god of his fathers, (whom Joshua describes as "other gods,") Jacob swore by Him who had revealed himself to Abraham and Isaac, by constituting them the progenitors of the promised Saviour. Only Isaac, however, is mentioned in Jacob's oath, because, previously to his being called to leave his father's house, Abram served "other gods."

God made a covenant with Abraham, engaging to be a God to him and to his seed. We are informed that the word *seed* here denotes Christ, Gal. iii. 16; and thus Abraham was taught that the covenant only included his children in the line of Isaac, from

whom Christ was to spring. Ishmael, therefore, and Abraham's six sons by Keturah, had no part in the covenant, while Isaac, in the supernatural manner of his birth,—for, from their advanced age, it was naturally impossible that his parents could have a child,—prefigured the Son of the virgin, and also believers, who, being born of the Spirit, are "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise;" Gal. iii. 29. Isaac had two sons; the one was rejected, while God established his covenant with the other, bestowing upon him the blessing of Abraham, and constituting him the progenitor of Christ. Jacob's twelve sons were the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, who were multiplied into a nation, delivered from bondage, brought into covenant with God, fed with manna during forty years in the wilderness, and put in possession of Canaan, the emblem of the heavenly country, to which the true Israel are journeying through this world. In God's dealings with them, and in the ordinances of worship which they were commanded to observe, all the doctrines and privileges of the spiritual and eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ were embodied, and *they* were distinguished from all others as the *redeemed* of the Lord.

Thus was Israel separated from the rest of the world, and acknowledged as God's peculiar people. A priesthood was established among them, and daily sacrifices offered by God's appointment, not for mankind in general, but for Israel, the type of the Israel of God, the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, Isa. xxvi. 2. When Jesus appeared, his personal

ministry was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and the apostles frequently speak of the *mystery* of the "Gentiles being fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel," Eph. iii. 4–6. This mystery consisted in their being "graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree," for they inherit the blessing by being adopted into Abraham's family, on which salvation was entailed.

Thus we find that from the first announcement of salvation to any of Adam's race, no countenance is given to the doctrine of universal redemption. When God's purpose of sending the Saviour was first revealed, it was declared, that the many brethren, of whom Christ is the first-born, (Rom. viii. 29.) were to share the victory of their elder Brother, while all others were to be partakers of the doom of the serpent, John viii. 44; and from the fall to the coming of Christ, this was typified in the blessings bestowed upon the family from which he was to spring, and the curse pronounced upon those who were not related to him. The former were favoured with the lively oracles; God dwelt among them as their covenant God, while all others were suffered to walk in their own ways, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,—strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. "Pour out thy fury," says the prophet, "upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name, for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, Jer. x. 25. Here is the enmity which God declared he would put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent.

When the Saviour appeared, the end which God had in view in the separation of the family from which he was to spring was accomplished. Having, by himself, purged the sins of his people, he was raised for their justification,* and commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature. The way of salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus, is now, by the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. The Lord hath sent forth the rod of his power out of Zion, and through faith he takes up his abode in the heart of those for whom he gave himself, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, "and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." There is now no distinction of families. This was only a figure for the time then present, but the shadows have fled away, and no man is known after the flesh. In every age, there was in Israel a remnant, in whose hearts God put his fear; but now he hath visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. But while the gospel is to be preached to every creature, the Lord reserves in his own hands the prerogative of giving the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 6.

The way that leadeth to life is still narrow, and few there be that find it;† not because the invita-

* Reason, as well as Scripture, teaches us, that if the atonement was sufficient, it secured the justification of those for whom it was offered; hence, we read, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. Atonement and justification are inseparably connected, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

† In conversing with a person unacquainted with the gospel, I quoted this passage. "Do you know," said she, "I do not believe that." "I am glad," I replied, "to hear you say so; I have been endeavouring, all along, to convince you that you do not believe the

tions of the gospel are limited, but because the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man; "he loveth the darkness rather than the light," because his deeds are evil. The gospel reveals the Lord as having come to deliver his people from this present evil world, but men love the world, their souls cleave to the dust, they place their happiness in the gratification of the lusts of the flesh and of the mind; and, conseqnently, they reject the counsel of God against themselves, and prefer the things that are seen and temporal to the things that are unseen and eternal. Indeed, were it not that Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and the remission of sins; that all power is committed to him, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him, not one of the human race would receive the love of the truth. Hence, when the Lord sent forth the apostles, he encouraged them, by the assurance that he was with them always, even to the end of the world; and they uniformly ascribe their success to his almighty power.

Men blaspheme the doctrine of election, as if it excluded all, with the exception of a few, from the enjoyment of eternal life; while it is entirely owing to election that any are saved. Had it not been that a multitude, which no man shall be able to number, was given to Christ, before the foundation of the world; had he not come to do the will of God for their salvation, and by one offering for ever to perfect them

Scriptures, and now you have acknowledged it." "But I do believe the Scriptures." "You said this moment you did not believe this plain declaration." "Not in your sense of it." "But I gave no sense of it, I merely quoted it."

that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14, the whole human race had perished, notwithstanding the revelation of mercy. But this could not be; "whom God did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 29, 30.

Perhaps the most plausible argument for universal redemption is, that only upon this supposition can a man be called to believe that Christ died for him. But where do we find the apostles preaching such doctrine? They never, indeed, lost sight of the importance of bringing home the truth to the heart. Their mode of preaching was eminently calculated to guard their hearers against viewing the gospel as a system of speculation. They commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. They not only testified that the children of Adam are lost, but they said, "Thou art the man;" and they felt they had gained nothing, till the conscience of their hearers was awakened to a sense of their guilt and danger. Still they were not satisfied, till Christ was formed in them the hope of glory, till they could say, "the life which I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." But they never told an unbeliever that Christ died for him.

Where is the inconsistency of Christ having laid down his life for his sheep, with the gospel being preached to all? No man is called to believe what is not true, whatever reception he may give it. Procla-

mation of pardon is made to sinners through faith in the blood of Christ; the door of the ark is thrown open, and all who hear are invited to enter the refuge which God hath provided, and from which none are excluded. The invitation is free as the light of heaven, and every external impediment is removed. No price, no qualification is required; but the god of this world blinds the minds of all whose sins Christ did not expiate upon Calvary; of all whom he did not redeem from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them, Gal. iii. 13, that they might inherit a blessing, 1 Pet. iii. 9. Faith, and every other spiritual blessing, are bestowed upon sinners through the atonement, and all for whom it was offered are in due time made partakers of the benefit. In short, the Lord knoweth them that are his; he will lose none of those who were given him—whom he ransomed with his own blood—but will deliver them all in full tale to his Father, saying, "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me," Heb. ii. 13.

It is sometimes asked, If Christ did not die for all, how can the gospel be preached to all? how can men be invited to receive a salvation which never was intended for them? Secret things belong to God; men are not called upon to believe the gospel as elect or unelect, but as sinners. The gospel is the fan with which Christ separates the wheat from the chaff. The invitation is to all who come under the joyful sound, without exception; but to some it is the savour of death unto death, to others the savour of life unto life, 2 Cor. ii. 16. "Many," says our Lord, "are called, but few chosen," Mat. xx. 16.

xxii. 14. As it was in Israel, so it is in every age; the election receive the love of the truth, and the rest are blinded, Rom. xi. 7. Thus, by men's reception of the gospel, those whom God's righteous Servant hath justified, having borne their iniquities, Isaiah liii. 11, are distinguished from those whom he never knew.

CHAPTER IV.

Erroneous view of the atonement;—removes no difficulty;—inseparable connexion of guilt and suffering;—imputation;—Rom. v; 1 Cor. xv. 22;—effects of the doctrine of universal redemption;—it is no redemption;—all mankind not included in the covenant of which Christ is Surety;—Rom. viii. 33, 34;—sacrifices in Israel;—intercession and blessing;—Rom. viii. 32.

DISLIKE to the doctrine of the substitution and suretyship of Christ, has darkened the minds of many, and led them to set aside the atonement altogether. The prevalent notion at present is, not that by his incarnation, sufferings, and death, Christ made atonement for those whose sins he bare in his own body on the tree,—thus cancelling their guilt, and opening a channel through which mercy and love flow to them in perfect consistency with justice,—but that the manifestation of the Son of God was designed as a public display, in order to maintain the honour of the Divine government. What a view does this give of Him before whom the nations are a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust in the balance! Was God manifest in the flesh? Did the Creator of the world, in our nature, suffer and die merely to produce an impression upon the minds of rebels, and to prevent his government from sinking into contempt! No; it was that He might be JUST, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; that he might be faithful, and just in forgiving the sins of those whose great Head and Surety, according to his covenant engagements, endured the penalty which

they had incurred, and yielded to the law which they had broken the obedience which it demanded.

In connexion with the denial of the sufferings of Christ being really an atonement for the sins of his people,—thus reducing the incarnation to a contrivance for upholding the Divine government; as if, like human governments, it were liable to fall into contempt, and required support by saving appearances,—the sentiment appears to be gaining ground, that the peculiarity of redemption consists in its application. Christ, it is alleged, died for sin, and the sovereignty of God is exhibited by revealing his Son in those who shall be heirs of salvation, and whom he makes willing in the day of his power.

Now, this is very different from the view presented to us in the word of God. There we are taught that the redeemed were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated to the adoption of children. They were given to Christ in the counsels of eternity, who, in the fulness of time, united himself with them, by assuming their nature, for their sakes sanctifying himself, and giving himself for them an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour; thus redeeming them from death, and ransoming them from the power of the grave. Having risen from the dead, and ascended up on high, he is seated at the right hand of God, and has received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him, of whom he will lose nothing, but will raise it up again at the last day, John vi. 39.

The doctrine of Christ dying for sin, instead of dying for his people, is a modification of the doctrine

of universal redemption; some of whose advocates perceived that, if Christ died for the sins of all men, it depreciates his sacrifice to admit that it is not effectual for their salvation. It is true the scripture says, "Christ once suffered for sins," but it is added, "that he might bring *us* to God."* The greatest care is always taken to prevent our viewing the gospel in the light of abstract truth; it is uniformly presented in a practical form; but, after all, what difficulty is removed by representing Christ as dying either for sin, or for all mankind, if the doctrine of personal election is held? The very same objections may in this case be, and in point of fact are, brought against the general invitations of the gospel, since it must be admitted that it will be a "stumbling-block and foolishness to all whom God hath not from the beginning chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13, and whom he consequently calls by his grace, Gal. i. 15.

The whole controversy about the extent of the atonement has its origin in men not understanding the nature of the connexion between Adam and his children. Mankind were created in him, and in him they came under condemnation. This is a hard saying, which only those who are taught of God will receive, although we have a palpable demonstration of it in the death of infants. The denial of the

* Many errors respecting the atonement, as well as other parts of Divine truth, originate in not understanding that the epistles are addressed to believers, and consequently considering what the apostles write as referring to men in general; for instance, he gave himself for *us*, not for mankind in general, but for us who have fled to Christ for refuge.

efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of all for whom it was offered, is uniformly connected with the denial of the imputation of Adam's guilt, and of Christ's righteousness.

Under the righteous government of God, there is an inseparable connexion between sin and suffering, purity and enjoyment. From the perfection of the Divine character, we may rest assured that there does not exist in the universe one particle of suffering, except in connexion with sin. Had not mankind sinned in Adam, infants would not have been subjected to pain, and sufferings, and death; and had not Jesus, who knew no sin, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, been made *sin** for his people; had not their iniquity been laid, or made to meet upon him, he could not by possibility have been exposed to suffering. It must be well with the righteous; none ever perished, being innocent. When, therefore, we hear the loud and bitter cry—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—proceeding from those lips in which there was no guile; by which the sacrifice of prayer and praise had been offered up continually, we have a demonstration that sin was imputed to him. And whose sins were imputed? Not the sins of all mankind, for in that case his sacrifice did not answer its end; it did not finish transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity. It left the greater part of those for whom it was offered under the curse of the broken

* Not as it is erroneously understood by some, a *sin offering*; for it is opposed to righteousness, which cannot mean a *righteous offering*. Besides, the reason of the victim being called sin, or a sin-offering, was, that the sin of the offerer was figuratively transferred to his offering. Hence the sacrifices demonstrate the transference of guilt, Lev. xvi. 21, 22, &c.

law, which is proved by their continued enmity against God, leading such of them as hear the gospel to neglect the great salvation; while the greater part of those for whom the atonement was made, never heard the report of a Saviour having been provided, and consequently lived and died without God, and having no hope in the world. On the other hand, the reception of the gospel by the elect is the proof of their having been redeemed from the curse; in consequence of which, they receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. The scriptures teach us that Christ was "stricken for the transgression of God's people," Isa. liii. 8; "the chastisement of their peace was laid upon him, and by his stripes they are healed," Isaiah liii. 5. When the sins of the redeemed are sought for, they shall not be found; they are buried in the fathomless ocean of everlasting love, flowing through the ample satisfaction made to justice by their elder brother, their kinsman Redeemer.

The imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness, is clearly proved by the apostle, Rom. v. in which a parallel is drawn between Adam, the covenant head of mankind, and the second Adam, the covenant Head of the redeemed. Unless this distinction be kept in view, the passage is conclusive in favour of universal salvation. Indeed, this is the inevitable result of universal redemption. Did God punish the sins of mankind in his Son? and shall the greater part of the human race perish, notwithstanding? This difficulty can only be got rid of by denying the atonement altogether, and representing the death of Christ as a spectacle to the universe, in proof of God's disapprobation of sin, while it neither

made satisfaction to justice, nor established his everlasting truth. This is the old Socinian doctrine, that the death of Christ was not necessary, in order to guilty man being pardoned; in other words, that no atonement for sin was required, but, that in the sufferings, and death, and exaltation of Christ, (all which they admit) we see an encouragement to men to return to God.

In Rom. v. the apostle says, "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," ver. 18. Unless the parallel between Adam and Christ and their respective families, to which we have referred, be kept in view, the salvation of all mankind is here broadly asserted. But while the *all* men, upon whom "by the offence of one, the judgment came to condemnation," includes every child of Adam; the *all* men upon whom, "by the righteousness of one, the free gift came unto justification of life," includes only the family of the second Adam—the little flock who shall inherit the kingdom. The same truth is repeated in the following verse: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," ver. 19. *The many*, that is, all mankind, were made sinners* by Adam's disobedience, so by the obedience of one shall *the many*, that is, those that are Christ's—the whole family in heaven and in earth, Eph. iii. 15.—be made righteous. Can the

* It is not said, the many were made *sufferers*, as if they only experienced the consequences of Adam's sin; they were made *sinners* by Adam's disobedience.

imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness be more clearly expressed?

The apostle uses very similar language, 1 Cor. xv. 22: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Some refer this to the resurrection of the just and the unjust; but while all mankind are included in the *all* who died in Adam, the apostle limits the *all* who shall be made alive, to believers. But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards *they that are Christ's* at his coming. Neither in this chapter, nor in 1 Thess. iv. is anything said of the resurrection of the wicked. They shall, indeed, be raised, but they are never said to be made alive. They shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation. They were dead while they lived, and shall be raised to be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

Universal redemption reduces the love of Christ, in laying down his life for his people, to a very small matter. Now, this is a subject upon which the sacred writers delight to expatiate. They represent the love of Christ as passing knowledge; they dwell upon its height, and depth, and breadth, and length. "Greater love," says the Lord, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" but the advocates of universal redemption represent him as having laid down his life for those to whom he will say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

This has led many Protestants upon the Continent to maintain universal salvation. They argue, that, Christ having died for all, secures the salvation of all mankind. Others, reading that the unrighteous shall

not inherit the kingdom of God, but shall be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, deny the atonement altogether; and this doctrine appears to be rapidly gaining ground in this country.

Another insuperable objection to the scheme of universal redemption is, that comparatively few of the human race ever heard the name of Jesus, and consequently, are without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. It may be said, this is the fault of those to whom the lively oracles were committed. And what then? shall so many millions for whom Christ died, perish through the sloth and wickedness of others? Salvation is by grace through faith; faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The apostle inquires, "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" "Where there is no vision the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18; "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law," Rom. ii. 12.

In scripture, redemption is something substantial and palpable; it is redemption to God—from the earth—from among men—from bondage—from death—from the grave—from the curse of the law—from all iniquity—from our former vain conversation; but universal redemption frees us from nothing; it leaves us where it found us; it is like an idol; it is nothing in the world; it is another redemption, which is not another, but a perversion of the redemption of Christ.

The extent of the atonement may be ascertained by the simple question: Are all mankind, or only a part of them included in that covenant, of which Christ is the surety? Heb. vii. 22. In consequence

of Adam being the covenant head of all mankind, all are involved in his condemnation; but Christ is not the head of all mankind, but of the seed of the woman —the Church; and to all but the Church he will say, "I never knew you." He was given as a covenant of the people, and by his death he hath reconciled them to God,—hath redeemed them from all iniquity, and purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He is now exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and the remission of sins. By the gospel, he separates from the world those whom he has purchased with his blood, and thus brings them within the bond of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," John x. 11. He tells us he must bring his sheep into the fold, and adds, "they shall hear my voice," John x. 16. He will assuredly guide them with his counsel, and afterwards receive them to his glory.

In the history of Abraham and his family in the line of Isaac and Jacob, we have an exhibition of all the great doctrines of the gospel. The redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage is a type of the eternal redemption of the true Israel. Hence they are exclusively termed the *redeemed* of the Lord, in contrast with the rest of mankind. Their redemption was effected by Moses taking them down with him into the Red Sea, and when he arose from his figurative baptism, they rose with him, 1 Cor. x. 2. This exactly corresponds with the antitype. The true Israel died, and were buried with Christ; with him they rose; and such is the unity of the Head and

the members, that they are represented as "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 6.

The certainty of the salvation of those for whom Christ died is clearly established by the apostle's words: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 33, 34. Here we learn the safety of the elect; because God justifies them, and who, it is asked, shall condemn them? It is added, it is Christ that *died*, demonstrating that the justification of the elect is the certain consequence of Christ's death. Again, it is written, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him," 1 Thess. v. 9, 10. Here we are taught that the end of Christ's dying for his people was, that they might live together with him; in other words, they are appointed to receive salvation; and this is connected with his intercession, which is always represented as co-extensive with his atonement, upon which it is founded.

In Israel the priest only made intercession for those for whom he offered the sacrifice, and none for whom he offered were excluded from his intercession. Now Christ expressly disclaims praying for any but those who were given to him by the Father: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine," John xvii. 9.

There was a third part of the priestly office, namely, blessing the people. When the high-priest had carried the blood of the sin-offering into the most holy place, at the same time burning incense before the mercy-seat, he came out and blessed those for whom the offering had been made and the incense burnt. How beautifully is this figure fulfilled! Our great high-priest entered into heaven with his own blood, by which the new covenant had been ratified; there he ever liveth to make intercession for his people. Meantime, they are waiting for him without, and to them he will appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.

Thus we see the three distinct but inseparable parts of the priestly office fulfilled in Jesus. He intercedes for sinners on the ground of the ample satisfaction he has made on their behalf; the Father, in virtue of the perfection of his sacrifice, heareth him always, and he will shortly appear, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And, so far from the justification of the redeemed tarnishing the honour of the law of God, the channel through which their pardon flows renders it far more glorious. Never was the Divine justice so awfully exhibited as in the salvation of the Church of Christ.

The following passage is conclusive as to the extent of Christ's atonement: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Here we are informed that God will freely give all things to those for whom he delivered

up his Son; if, then, he delivered up his Son for all mankind, shall he not with him also freely give them faith, repentance, pardon, holiness, and eternal life? But God does not give these blessings to all, and hence it inevitably follows, that he did not deliver up his Son for all men.

CHAPTER V.

The sufficiency of the atonement;—the sincerity of gospel invitations;—difficulties will be explained;—impossibility of the innocent suffering;—view given of the atonement, leads to Socinianism, dishonourable to God's government;—the universality of the atonement disproved;—general expressions the *world*, *all*;—exposition of 2 Cor. v. 14, 21;—the Gentiles;—summary of the arguments in opposition to universal redemption.

It has been asked, Was not the death of Jesus sufficient for the redemption of all mankind? We may ask, in return, Were not the power and goodness of God sufficient for the salvation of all mankind? We may as well allege, that any part of mankind being lost is an impeachment of the power and goodness of God, as, that the atonement not being made for all, detracts from its value. The very reverse is the case; to represent the atonement as made for all, while only some are saved, depreciates its worth. According to the advocates of universal redemption, what was made for all is only available for a part of those whom Satan held in bondage. He was able to retain multitudes for whose sin Christ made his soul an offering. In fact, this sentiment sets aside the atonement altogether; if Christ died both for Peter and Judas, and if the former is saved while the latter is lost, Peter owes his salvation to something else than the death of Christ. Yes, it may be replied, Peter was saved by faith, Judas perished through unbelief; but if Peter's faith was not bestowed upon him through the atonement, which is the source of every heavenly

blessing to fallen man, his salvation was not the fruit of the death of Christ. *If Christ died for all men, no man is saved by his death.*

There are, at present, so many millions of men in the world, and the sun enlightens them all. Were the number doubled, it would not prevent any man from seeing as clearly as he does at present; but God has seen fit to limit the light of the sun to those who actually inhabit the earth, and to whom he has given eyes to behold the light. Would it add to the brightness of the sun if millions more enjoyed its light?

Again, the question has been put, Is not God sincere in the invitations of the gospel? Most assuredly. They are addressed to every creature who comes under their joyful sound. Every external impediment is removed. The message is, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Have your sins been aggravated? have they been long persisted in? have they been committed against light and your own convictions? No matter, the blood of Jesus cleanseth believers from all sin.* "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." These, and a thousand other passages, exhibit the boundless freeness of the gospel invitations, and they are not promulgated in vain, for by them the ordained to eternal life are gathered in. They fully answer the end which God had in view,—the salvation of his chosen people,—while they demonstrate the desperate wickedness of all who refuse to be reconciled to God, and to enter into the refuge provided for the lost, the

* This passage is usually quoted, "the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," but the apostle says, "it cleanseth us (who believe) from all sin."

ruined, and the guilty. Thus too, are believers taught to appreciate the riches of that love which made them to differ, which set their feet upon a rock, and established their goings, while pride is hid from their eyes by the conviction, that for this difference they are indebted solely to the discriminating grace of God.

To mention all the passages in which Christ is said to have died *for his people*, would be to transcribe a great part of the New Testament. They are represented as having died, and risen in him. "He was manifest in these last times *for you who by him do believe in God*," 1 Pet. i. 21. Who these are, is one of the secret things which belong to God; but not more certainly is the steel attracted by the magnet, than the redeemed are drawn to Christ through the publication of the gospel.

Difficulties may, doubtless, be started; and that there are real difficulties arising from the state of our knowledge, is implied in the declaration, "that if any man will be wise in this world, he must become a fool that he may be wise." These difficulties will vanish away; the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God is approaching, and then the infinite wisdom and goodness of every part of the Divine procedure will be apparent, and every tongue shall confess that he is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right in all his ways.

According to the Circular, the death of Christ is to be viewed "as a public satisfaction, designed to honour the demands of moral government;" "as a public transaction intended to avert a public calamity, by making amends to public justice." But what

honour redounds to moral government, or what amends are made to public justice, by the sufferings of an innocent person? There is no such anomaly in Christ's gospel; the just indeed suffered, but not before he was made sin; the Lord previously laid upon him the iniquities of all his people. Justice can only visit the guilty. Innocence presents an adamantine shield, which the sword of justice cannot penetrate. Had God, upon the rebellion of man, destroyed a hundred worlds, or twelve legions of angels, and recreated them, it would indeed have been a display of power, but what "amends" would it have made to "public justice?" According to the views of the writers of the Circular, the death of Jesus does *not* "honour the demands of moral government." It is a mere arbitrary act; it makes no atonement, and is directly opposed to the doctrine of the Word of God, in which Christ is represented as becoming the near kinsman of his people, that he might have the right of redemption, and in this character, as their great Surety, Substitute, and Representative, restore what he took not away, Psal. lxix. 4.

To deny the substitution of Christ for his people, and to represent his sufferings and death as a public act illustrative of God's disapprobation of sin, is directly calculated to lead to Arianism and Socinianism. It is rather too much, that God should be manifest in the flesh, and suffer and die for the sake of example, and in order to maintain the honour of his government. This represents the throne of the Almighty as standing upon the frail and secondary principles of utility and expediency, whereas it for

ever rests upon the immovable basis of unimpeachable justice, and everlasting truth.

The Circular proceeds: "Having *so* learned Christ, you, in conjunction with others like minded, see the consistency, and feel the necessity, of attempting the illumination and spiritual recovery of *every* human being. For, cherishing no misgivings on the sufficiency and *universality* of the atonement, you perceive that the Gospel remedy, in its provisions and blessings, can with honest truth and genuine sincerity, be tendered to every nation and kindred, tongue and people, over the length and breadth of the earth."—Pages 14, 15.

There is no question of the *sufficiency* of the atonement for the salvation of all mankind, had it so pleased God; but its *universality* is disproved, 1st, By the breadth of the way that leadeth to destruction, and the multitudes who go down thereat; and 2ndly, By the matter of fact that by far the greater part of the world, during eighteen hundred years after the atonement was made, never heard the report of salvation, and have consequently lived and died without Christ, and without hope. The gospel has hitherto been confined to a comparatively small portion of the human race, although the knowledge of God has been much extended since the ascension of Jesus, having for two thousand years before his appearing been almost entirely confined to one family. That the gospel is, by the Divine commandment, to be preached to men of every nation, is most certain; and it can be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, over the length and breadth of the earth, by those who hold that all for whom Christ

died shall assuredly be saved, "with honest truth and genuine sincerity." Wherever we find a child of Adam, it is our duty to make known to him the glad tidings of a free and full salvation, and to assure him, by the word of the Lord, that if he confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart "that God raised him from the dead, he shall be saved."

There are, doubtless, many general expressions employed in the Word of God, respecting the atonement, such as God loving the *world*, John iii. 15; but this refers to the vanishing away of the old covenant, according to which, Israel alone were distinguished by the favour of God. Nicodemus supposed that Messiah would come to save Israel and to condemn the world; but the Lord informed him, "that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17. Surely this does not mean that it was God's purpose to save all men; had this been so, it would have been effected. It obviously means men of all nations. "There is now neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision or uncircumcision;" no man is known "after the flesh."

The design of the atonement is clearly pointed out in the prophecy of the high priest: "And this spake he not of himself: but, being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad," John xi. 51, 52. Such was the object which God had in view, "to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad;" to collect the

seed of the woman; those who had been predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ ; those whom Jesus is not ashamed to call brethren, and for whom he has obtained " eternal redemption," Heb. ix. 12. The best comment on those passages which speak of Christ being the propitiation for the sins of the *whole world*, and dying for *all*, is the song of the redeemed, " And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth," Rev. v. 9, 10. Again, " After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," Rev. vii. 9, 10.

The same rule of interpretation which vindicates universal redemption from the general expressions employed, will establish universal salvation : " I, if I be lifted up will draw *all men* unto me," John xii. 32. " Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin *of the world*," John i. 29. " We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour *of the world*," John iv. 42.* " When he is come, he will reprove

* The world cannot here mean all men, for, as God is not the Creator of those whom he has not created—or the Preserver of those whom he does not preserve—or the Judge of those whom he does not judge—neither is Christ the Saviour of those whom he does not save. God was not the Saviour or Redeemer of the Egyptians, the Assyrians,

the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," John xvi. 8. "For none of us liveth to himself, and *no man* dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

The condemnation of all might be equally established. "The *whole world* lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and *the world* knew him not," John i. 10; and this is in immediate connexion with the assertion, that Christ enlighteneth *every man* that cometh into *the world*, John i. 9. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit may, in this way, be proved to be universal; "but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every man* to profit withal," 1 Cor. xii. 7.*

The expression *the world*, is often used to denote many. The Pharisees said, "*the world* is gone after him," John xii. 19. "Show thyself to *the world*," John vii. 4. "That *the world* (men of all nations) may believe that thou hast sent me," John xvii. 21. "We are made a spectacle unto *the world*," 1 Cor. iv. 9. "All *the world* wondered after the beast," Rev. xiii. 3. "*All the world* should be taxed," Luke ii. 1. If these, and many similar passages, cannot be understood to mean all mankind, there can be no good

or the Moabites, but of Israel alone. The middle wall of partition is now broken down, and he is the Saviour of men of all nations; but as he came to gather together the children of God who are scattered abroad among all nations, he is called the Saviour of the world, and is said to take away the sin of the *world*.

* Every believer is a partaker of the Spirit, but the *manifestation* of the Spirit, means the palpable demonstration of having the Spirit by the miraculous gifts, of which the apostle is treating.

reason for maintaining that all mankind are beloved of God, or that Christ died for the sins of those to whom he will declare, *I never knew you.*

The same observations apply to the word *all*, which is frequently used in reference to the atonement. It refers to men of *all* nations, in opposition to Israel, to whom, for so long a time, the means of salvation were limited. There is a very remarkable passage, which gives us a key to the others in which the word is made use of: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died," 2 Cor. v. 14. Our translators render the second clause "then were all dead;" but this is palpably erroneous. The same verb is used in both clauses, and the same tense of the verb, and, therefore, to vary the translation is improper. In this passage, the apostle teaches us, that all for whom Christ died, died in him; that, in virtue of the unity of the head and the members, his death was their death. This is the uniform doctrine of the New Testament; and hence believers are enjoined to reckon themselves dead unto sin, Rom. vi. 11; Col. ii. 20; iii. 3, 4. &c.

After stating (verse 15) that Christ died for all, that those who live (in other words, are dead unto sin and alive unto God, Rom. vi. 11.) should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again;* he proceeds, "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more," 2 Cor. v. 16.

* This exactly corresponds with Rom. xiv. 8; which must necessarily be understood as exclusively applying to believers.

In common with his countrymen, he had known Christ, after the flesh, as the Saviour of the nation of Israel, but when he learned that Christ died for all, (not for that nation only, but that he might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, to whatever nation they might belong,) he knew no man after the flesh,—he accounted no man nearer the kingdom of God on account of his birth,—nor did he know Christ after the flesh, as the Saviour of any particular family. He proceeds: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. Believers are re-created in Christ, Eph. ii. 10. They "have put off the old man with his deeds; are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 10. Hence old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. The Christian is brought, as it were, into a new world; he has new apprehensions, and new desires. Our attention is then directed to him by whose power this change is effected: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," 2 Cor. v. 18. God is here described as having reconciled the apostles to himself by Jesus Christ, and having given them the ministry of reconciliation; committing to them a dispensation of the gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 17. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation," Cor.

v. 19. Here we are taught that the trespasses of the *world*,—which God was reconciling to himself in Christ,—are not imputed unto them. This necessarily refers only to the people of God, for to all others their trespasses are imputed; but as the redeemed consist of men of all nations, the general appellation, *the world*, is made use of. The same expression is used Rom xi. 15, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world." This surely does not mean every individual of mankind, but refers to God visiting the Gentiles, having commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature. "Now then," says the apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

The apostles were Christ's ambassadors, as though God did (by them) beseech men to be reconciled to himself. The atonement was made—the sacrifice was accepted, and sinners were invited to enjoy the friendship of God through the death of his Son. The invitation was enforced by the consideration, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here we have the imputation of the sins of Christ's people to their great Substitute and Surety plainly stated. The apostle does not say, he made him to be sin for *you*—to whom the gospel was addressed, and who were besought to be reconciled to God—but for *us* whom he hath reconciled to himself, ver. 18, who have received the reconciliation, Rom. v. 11, who have received Christ, and are conse-

quently the sons of God, John i. 12, 13. If this message was slighted, there remained no more sacrifice for sin, and they must abide the consequence of irreconcilable enmity against God. The efficacy of the death of Christ, in removing the guilt of his people, is thus clearly stated: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 7—10. While they were sinners Christ died for them, they were justified "by his *blood*," reconciled to God by his *death*, and should assuredly be saved by his life.

The rule of interpretation by which, from the general expressions, *all the world*, or *all men*, it is maintained, that Christ died for every individual of the human race, would establish the universal salvation of the Gentiles. "Then hath God also to the *Gentiles* granted repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. "On the *Gentiles* also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts x. 45. "Declaring the conversion of *the Gentiles*," Acts xv. 3. "Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto *the Gentiles*, and that they will hear it," Acts xxviii. 28. God is called the God of *the Gentiles*, because "he justifies the uncircumcision through faith," Rom. iii. 29, 30. "*The Gentiles* have attained to righteousness," Rom. ix. 30. "To make *the Gentiles* obedient by word and deed," Rom. xv. 18. "That the bless-

ing of Abraham might come on *the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ," Gal. iii. 14. "That by me the preaching might be fully known, and that *all the Gentiles* might hear," 2 Tim. iv. 17. From these, and other passages, it might be argued, that *all* the Gentiles heard and were converted, with as much plausibility as that Christ died for every individual, because the general expressions, *the whole world* and *all men*, are employed in reference to the death of Christ. It was not God's purpose in sending the gospel to the Gentiles to save them all, but he visited them, "to take out of them a people for his name," Acts xv. 14; thus the general expressions are explained.

The apostle, speaking of the gospel, describes it as having been "preached to *every creature* which is under heaven," Col. i. 23; Rom. x. 18. Such expressions refer to the extent of the commission, and the apostle uses the general term, as if it had been actually fulfilled; so it is said, "*all flesh* shall see the salvation of God," Luke iii. 6. "*all flesh* shall come to worship before me," Isaiah lxvi. 23. "I will pour out my Spirit upon *all flesh*," Acts ii. 17. God promised to Abraham, "that in him *all the families* of the earth should be blessed,' Gen. xii. 3. These, and many other passages prove, that such general expressions do not refer to every individual of mankind. Why, then, should they be thus interpreted, when the death of Christ is the subject treated of, especially when we see that eighteen hundred years after his resurrection, but a small proportion of mankind have heard the gospel? Nothing is more common than the use of general and even universal expressions, which are necessarily limited: "As the Lord thy God

liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not," 1 Kings xviii. 10. This must be understood of the neighbouring nations.

There is a passage to which much importance is attached, as if it were conclusive upon the subject. Christ is said to "taste death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. Such general expressions are limited by the context. The Lord says, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and *every* man presseth into it," Luke xvi. 16. Does this mean every individual of mankind? Surely not; it describes the effects of John's ministry with that of the Lord and his disciples, by which, a considerable stir had been created, very different from the general apathy which had formerly prevailed, Luke i. 16. When we read that the man whose eyes had been opened, "saw *every man* clearly, Mark viii. 25, does it mean every individual of the human race, or every man within the sphere of his newly acquired vision? "Then," says the apostle, "shall *every man* have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 5.; does this imply that God will approve of every individual of mankind? "Whom we preach, warning *every man*, and teaching *every man* in all wisdom; that we may present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus," Col. i. 28. It is obvious, that *every man* refers only to those to whom the apostle had access to preach the gospel.

As to Heb. ii. 9, we may observe, that *man* is a supplement; in the original, it is simply, "taste death for

every." But we have no objections to the supplement, for the connexion of the passage plainly shows, that the apostle is not speaking of mankind in general, but of every son whom God hath given to the Saviour. In ver. 10, we are taught, "that it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing *many sons* unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." In verse 11, the unity of those sons with their father the second Adam, is described; he is termed the *sanctifier*, they are *the sanctified*. This unity, or brotherhood, is confirmed, verses 12 and 13, by two quotations from the Old Testament; ver. 14, he is described as taking part in flesh and blood with the *children* whom God had given him. It is, therefore, obvious, that the *every* in verse 9, is limited to the *sons*, verse 10, the *sanctified*, verse 11, and the *children*, verse 13. It was for them and them alone that, according to this passage, Jesus tasted of death, by which he "destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered those, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage, verse 15. If, by *every man*, verse 9, we were to understand every individual of mankind, it would inevitably follow, that Jesus, by his death, had delivered our whole race.

The apostle goes on to say, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same."* Again, "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham," verses 16, 17. Why not the seed of Adam? because Adam was the head of mankind—Abraham the head of the heirs of promise.

* All mankind are partakers of flesh and blood, but he only took part with the children whom God had given him.

salvation was limited to and entailed upon the family of Abraham, and, therefore, Christ took on him the seed of Abraham, that, as a merciful and faithful high priest, he might make reconciliation for the sins of the people,* verse 17. This was shadowed forth by the sacrifices which were offered in Israel, but as no man is now known after the flesh, unbelieving Jews having no part with Christ—like Ishmael and the six sons of Keturah—are cast out of the family; while believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, like Isaac, who is termed Abraham's only son, Gen. xxii. 2, occupy their place, Gal. iii. 29. Hence, the Lord denies the unbelieving Jews to be Abraham's seed, John viii. 39; and the apostle tells us, that Abraham was the father of circumcision, only to them who walk in the steps of his faith, Rom. iv. 12.

In point of fact, there is not probably any refuge of lies in which men more habitually shelter themselves than the notion that Christ died for them. The most careless and profligate encourage themselves in their wickedness, by the persuasion that Christ died for them, and that therefore they are safe. The conclusion is sound, but the premises from which it is drawn are false. Those for whom Christ died shall never perish; he hath bought them with his blood, and, in his mediatorial character, has received all power in heaven and in earth to secure the fruit of his purchase. They were given to him in the everlasting council; he redeemed them to God

* The believing Gentiles are described as being in time past, not *a people*, but now, the people of God, 1 Pet. ii. 10. Christ is said to be given for a covenant of *the people*, for a light of the Gentiles. Thus God's chosen *people*, Israel, are distinguished from the Gentiles.

with his blood, and they are all sanctified by the Spirit, with which he is anointed beyond measure, for the completion of their salvation.

Thus we have seen that the whole tenor of the word of God is opposed to the doctrine of Christ having died for all mankind. When God's purposes of mercy were first made known, the Saviour was placed at the head of one of the families into which mankind was divided, clearly intimating that it was not God's purpose that all should be saved. The separation which had been made was kept up by the dispensations of Providence, till an attempt to put an end to it issued in the destruction of the world, with the exception of one family. Again the separation was renewed, and men were punished for not acquiescing in the will of God. An individual was then chosen to be the progenitor of the Saviour, and the father of all who should be heirs of salvation. But, to show that this privilege was not to be conferred in virtue of carnal descent, seven of his sons were cast out of his family, and only Isaac, the child of promise, the type of believers, Gal. iv. 28, was retained. Isaac had two sons, the younger of whom was chosen, and the other rejected. From Jacob's twelve sons sprang the twelve tribes of Israel, whom God set apart as his peculiar people, establishing his covenant with them, separating them from all other nations, raising up prophets among them to foretell the coming of the Saviour, committing to them the lively oracles, instituting sacrifices and ordinances of worship exclusively for them and for those who became incorporated with them; and, in his dealings with them, embodying all the privileges of the true

Israel. In virtue of Israel's carnal relation to Christ, they were blessed with all carnal blessings in earthly places; a figure, for the time then present, of the spiritual and heavenly blessings bestowed upon those who are spiritually united to Christ, Eph. i. 3.

The whole of the scripture history respects the family from which Christ was to spring, his kinsmen according to the flesh. Other families are mentioned only as they come in contact with it, or as their history serves to illustrate the history of God's chosen people. "You only," said God to Israel, "have I known of all the families of the earth," Amos iii. 2. All the rest of mankind were left to walk in their own ways, being plunged in the grossest idolatry. At length the Saviour appeared, and having offered the great sacrifice, sat down on the right hand of God, having commanded the gospel to be preached indiscriminately to all, without respect to national distinction; at the same time foretelling that his flock would be a little flock. This has been illustrated by the event. It has also happened, in the providence of God, that during eighteen hundred years, but a small part of the world has been visited with the light of the gospel; and the scriptures teach us that Christ's salvation is by faith, and that faith cometh by hearing.

The notion of the death of Christ being "designed to honour the demands of moral government," has been shown not only to be unscriptural, but derogatory to the Divine glory, as if his government, like human governments, depended upon public opinion. "He giveth not account of any of his matters," Job xxxiii. 13. It is his glory to conceal a thing,

Prov. xxv. 2; and in order to cast down the high imaginations of fallen man, he requires him implicitly to submit to the wisdom of his Maker, to become a fool that he may be wise.

It has been shown that the sentiment, that Christ died for all mankind, sets aside the atonement altogether. If the atonement was made for all, and if it was sufficient, all must be saved. Guilt could not be charged both on the Saviour and on those for whom he suffered. But the atonement is reduced by the advocates of universal redemption to a legal fiction. There is in it no reality; it is a *quasi*,—a make-believe atonement. It is connected with the denial of the imputation both of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness. Men, it is admitted, partake of the consequences of Adam's sin, and believers partake of the consequences of Christ's righteousness; but neither the guilt of the former, nor the righteousness of the latter is imputed. This compromises the justice of the Divine government, under which sin and suffering cannot be disjoined. Had not infants sinned in Adam, they could not by possibility suffer and die; and were not Christ's righteousness imputed to believers, it is impossible that they could be justified before God, who declares, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord," Prov. xvii. 15.

Various passages of scripture have been brought forward, in which the limitation of Christ's atonement to his people is plainly taught, and the general expressions employed have been shown in no wise to affect the truth of this fundamental doctrine; the

denial of which gives a completely different view of the plan of redemption, impeaches the justice of God, and derogates from the glory of his character, for it does not harmonize his perfections. In viewing mankind as accursed in Adam, being partakers of his guilt, and believers justified by the blood of Christ, and partakers of his righteousness, the God whom we worship is at once just and the justifier of those who believe. His *grace* reigns through *righteousness* unto eternal life, Rom. v. 21. The word which proceeded out of his mouth, "On the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die," was fulfilled in Adam and all his posterity, of whom he was the covenant head; and in Christ redeeming his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, and by death abolishing death, we see mercy and truth meeting together. The law of God is thus magnified, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in the perfect harmony of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are thrown open to the admiring contemplation of the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Many other passages of scripture might have been adduced in confirmation of the truth, but this would have increased the size of the Work more than the author judged necessary. He is sensible that the tide is setting strongly the other way, and he has no doubt it will proceed to more ungodliness; it will eat as doth a canker, it will inevitably lead to Arianism and Socinianism, for the divinity of Christ and his atonement are inseparably connected.

CHAPTER VI.

Denial of supernatural agency in conversion sets aside the work of the Spirit ;—1 Cor. iii. 6, 7 ; Jer. xxxi. 34 ; 1 John ii. 27 ; John vi. 45 ; Eph. ii. 10 ; Eph. i. 19, 20 ;—the fruits of the Spirit, improperly termed means ;—the laws of the universe ;—gospel no inherent efficacy apart from the power of the Holy Spirit ;—men being commanded to believe, no proof of their capability;—how men obey the gospel ;—Circular confounds means which God employs with man's capability ;—the principle of life distinct from forms of matter.

We shall now consider the doctrine of the Circular upon some other points connected with "the universality of the atonement."

"We hail you," say the writers, "on the *soundness* of your faith,—the evangelical character and complexion of your *creed*. Still our joy on this point is somewhat abated, when, as before hinted, we suspect that the Christian Church, and particularly our *own* section of it, has not thus far adequately appreciated the *efficacy* and sufficiency INHERENT to instituted *means;* or even duly pondered, and fully traced out, the close connexion between means and ends, on the question of man's actual restoration.

"To this interesting subject in both *its purport and tendency*, permit us now briefly to direct your earnest yet dispassionate inquiry. And does it not appear anomalous, and has it not often proved a source of perplexity to you, that the Gospel itself and the public ministry of it, as executed by your pastors, should maintain the cheering fact, that the salvation by Christ is of *unbounded* efficacy, and is equally provided for, and to be published to, every rational

creature; and that, nevertheless, in the institution of means, or, as it respects the power to avail himself of a personal experimental share in the blessing, the sinner finds an *impassable bar thrown across his way*, a bar which renders his recovery morally impossible, except, as it is imagined, that the presence of some *extraneous* and *supernatural* agency, bordering on the *miraculous*, if not emphatically so, is evinced? Does not this painful dilemma, on the horns of which many conscientious inquirers after the truth have been *writhed*, indicate, that either the scheme of our redemption is sadly incomplete in its provisions, or, that we have taken a partial, prejudiced, and erroneous view of its constitution? We exclaim, and you fervently respond:—*Perish, for ever perish, the idea of incompleteness!!* Then, as the great salvation meets the exigencies of *all*, and is urged on the attention, and proposed to the unfeigned acceptance of *all*, so the *means and capabilities* to insure a personal participation in its blessings, are *accessible to all* that are privileged with the gospel."—Pp. 15, 16.

That the salvation of Christ is commanded to be published to every rational creature, is certain, but, as the apostles were forbidden, on some occasions, to go to particular places, so, in the inscrutable providence of God, the far greater part of the earth has never been visited with the light of truth, and, yet, we are told, in the Circular, that "the salvation of Christ is equally provided for every rational creature." But this is not all,—"the efficacy and sufficiency INHERENT to instituted means have not been adequately appreciated, in consequence of which an impassable bar is thrown across the sinner's way,

which renders his recovery morally impossible, without some *extraneous and supernatural* agency bordering on the miraculous."

We cannot "hail" the writers "on the *soundness* of their faith." They distinctly deny the necessity of the work of the Spirit in conversion. What, then, does the apostle mean when he says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase: So, then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase?" 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. How does the doctrine of the Circular correspond with the distinguishing characteristic of the children of the *new covenant*, that they should not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; but should all know him, from the least to the greatest? Jer. xxxi. 34. The apostle, referring to the fulfilment of this promise, tells believers: "The anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," 1 John ii. 27. Here is the identical supernatural agency which the Circular reprobates; and in exact accordance with this, the Lord says, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John vi. 45. Believers are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. They are the subjects of "the exceeding greatness of God's power, which he wrought in Christ when he

raised him from the dead," Eph. i. 19, 20. Certainly, this is "*supernatural* agency bordering on the *miraculous*." "Ye," says the apostle, "are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," 2 Cor. iii. 3. Yet the Circular tells us, that to hold the necessity of some *extraneous* and *supernatural* agency, indicates "that either the scheme of our redemption is sadly incomplete in its provisions, or that we have taken a partial, prejudiced, and erroneous view of its constitution."

But let us attend to the means which, according to the Circular, possess such efficiency. "To demonstrate this proposition, (that no supernatural agency is necessary,) we inquire, what are the *means* in question, and on what grounds is their *competency* to be based and vindicated? The means, we reply, *simply consist* of the Word of God written in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,—of the faithful, earnest, and *energetic* preaching of the gospel, of serious and sedulous *attention* to the reading of the one and the hearing of the other,—of the *duties* of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,—of an open confession of the Saviour before men, by unfeigned obedience to the ordinance of baptism, and frequent celebration of the sacred supper; in fine, of effectual fervent prayer, constant watchfulness and self-denial, holy meditation and heavenly mindedness, walking in the Spirit, and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; a determined conflict with sin, Satan, and the world; and an unshaken perseverance in the faith, profession, and

practice of Christianity. These, brethren, are *the means*, or some of *the means of salvation.*"—P. 16.

The writers of the Circular might, with equal propriety, represent eating and drinking, sleeping and walking, as the *means* of obtaining life. That the man who has repented and turned to God, who walks in the Spirit, and does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, is a partaker of Christ's salvation, is most certain. What the writers term the means of salvation, are the fruits of the Spirit of life who dwells in Christ's people.

It is only by the power of the Spirit that the instituted means of the preaching of the gospel are made effectual. Hence it comes to some only in word, and to others in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. Thus God is pleased to reveal his Son in the heirs of salvation, and this is the "supernatural agency, bordering upon the miraculous," which it is the object of the Circular to oppose.

"But," says the Circular, "are the specified means *competent* to render such as possess and use them, *partakers of salvation?* If not, the method of recovery is imperfect, and leaves those for whom it was devised, in the condition of a maimed person, who, instead of two limbs requisite for support and motion, has only one. And can it be so? surely not; but the *means* are as *efficacious* as the salvation itself is *illimitable.* And if so, the *bar* adverted to, is the creation of *human* invention, a production of creeds and theories constructed in times *less* illumined and *more stringent*, and reared on the basis of a coerced and restricted notion of 'revealed things.'"—Pp. 16, 17.

Wherever we see the fruits of the Spirit, which are

represented by the Circular, as "instituted means," we shall cheerfully acknowledge, that those who produce them have passed from death unto life; but, according to the Scriptures, the fruits of the Spirit are produced only by his power, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. The apostles' doctrine is still a stumbling-block and foolishness to the authors of the Circular; they have no adequate notion of man's natural condition. He was created in a state of entire dependance upon his Maker, which he attempted to shake off, that he might be as God. The gospel brings those who believe it to a sense of their utter helplessness, ignorance, folly, and depravity, and receiving the kingdom of God as little children, they are made wise unto salvation. But no man can impart this wisdom to his neighbour; the word of God, which is the grand means of salvation, is a sealed book to every man in his natural state. When he hears of man's inability to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, without Divine teaching, he exclaims, "Why doth he yet find fault?" He feels that this doctrine places him "in the condition of a person, who, instead of two limbs, requisite for support and motion, has only one;" and he asks, "Can it be so? surely not." Having settled this point to his own entire satisfaction, he arrives at the conclusion, that the "impassable bar" which rendered his recovery morally impossible, without "some extraneous and supernatural agency bordering on the miraculous," "is the creation of human invention, a production of creeds and theories constructed in times less illumined and more

stringent, and reared on the basis of a coerced and restricted notion of revealed things."—P. 17.

While the writers of the Circular hailed the churches which they were addressing on the soundness of their faith, they confessed that their joy was somewhat damped by the consideration, that their own section of the Christian Church had not "thus far adequately appreciated the efficacy and sufficiency inherent to instituted means; or even duly pondered and fully traced out the close connexion between means and ends on the question of man's actual restoration;" but having warmed, in the prosecution of the subject, this abatement of their joy is forgotten, and they proceed to congratulate the churches "on the firm persuasion, that the efficacy of the means, exactly squares with that of the great reconciliation."—P. 17.

In order to corroborate the doctrine of the efficacy of the means, the Circular proceeds to particulars: "Where the word of a king is, there is power,"—"sovereign, legislative, and institutional authority; a species of authority which arms even civil enactments with felt and acknowledged force and energy. But if it is thus on such a footing, much more is it so when *divine institution* is concerned. For when '*God commands* all men every where to repent,' the injunction supposes the presence of adequate *means*, *powers*, or *capabilities*, at the same time that it enforces an imperative duty. And how can we reconcile the direct and unqualified appeals to men at large, charging them '*to make them new hearts*,'—'to believe the gospel,'—to be reconciled to God,'—'to forsake their evil ways and thoughts, and return unto the

the Lord,' unless they *possess* sufficient facilities for *enabling* them so to do? As the laws of the universe contain a sort of inherent power, arising from the *fiat* of Omnipotence, to accomplish the stupendous results which they produce on its vast and complex machinery, may we not assert, that the law, or appointment of means, IF *improved* according to its nature, and as mankind *are* capacitated, is *competent* to advance them to a state of *actual salvation?*" —P. 17.

Here we find that most irrational and unscriptural notion which prevails among infidel philosophers, of the universe being governed by certain laws, containing "a sort" (query, what sort?) "of inherent power" to produce results. No sooner did man sin, than he sought to hide himself from God, and ever since, his posterity have endeavoured to put something between themselves and the Almighty. Such is the origin of what are termed the laws of nature, or of the universe. There is no objection to the phrase, if it be understood to denote the uniformity of the Divine procedure; but when, as in the passage before us, the laws of the universe are represented as accomplishing results by "a sort of inherent power," the language is equally unphilosophical and unscriptural. The universe is not like a clock, which, having been wound up, will go while the artist is asleep or absent. The Almighty power which called the universe into existence, is constantly employed in sustaining it, and carrying forward the wonderful purpose for which it was created. Hence, the Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Through the whole of the word of God we are taught

to trace HIS hand in every event, whether great or small. A sparrow falls not to the ground by the laws of the universe, if, by these, we understand something apart from the agency of the omnipresent God.

In exact correspondence with this, every converted sinner is represented as God's workmanship. The gospel has no inherent efficacy apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah has revealed himself as subsisting in Three Persons, and each sustains an important part in the plan of salvation. The Father sent forth his Son, for the salvation of the children whom he had given him; the Son took part with his children in flesh and blood, by his sacrifice cancelled their guilt, and obtained for them eternal redemption; while the Holy Spirit quickens them when dead in trespasses and sins, and by giving them to know and believe the love which God hath to them, sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts. Hence, they are baptised in his name, or into the faith of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to each of whom they are equally indebted for the gift of eternal life. As truly as mankind were created in Adam, so truly are believers created in Christ. As the children of the former, they are born of corruptible seed; as the children of the latter, they are born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. In neither case is the birth produced by the "inherent power" of the means, but by the power of God, who represents children as his gift, 1 Chron. xxviii. 5, and who has engaged that Christ shall see his seed, shall prolong his days, and that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. It is certain, that God commands all men every where

to repent, but repentance, like every other spiritual blessing, is the gift of God, Zech. xii. 10.

"He that doth not know," says Dr Owen, "that God hath *promised to work in us* in a way of *grace*, what he requires from us in a way of *duty*, hath either never read the Bible, or doth not believe it, or never prayed, or never took notice of what he prayed for; he is a heathen, he hath nothing of the Christian in him, who doth not pray to God to work in him what he requires of him. To fancy an inconsistency in these things, is to charge God foolishly. If there be an opposition between these things, it is either because the nature of man is not meet to be commanded, or because it needs not to be assisted. The Holy Spirit so worketh in us, that he worketh by us; and what he doth in us, he doth by us. Our duty it is to apply ourselves unto his commands, according to the conviction of our minds, and his work is to enable us to perform them."*

When the disciples heard of the Holy Ghost falling on the Gentiles, they exclaimed, "then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. In all the epistles, believers are stirred up to gratitude to Him who made them to differ from others, by calling them into the fellowship of his dear Son. We never read of any "*powers* or *capabilities*" which they possessed by means of which they had been delivered from the wrath to come.

Men are commanded to make them new hearts —to believe the gospel—to be reconciled to God—to forsake their evil ways and thoughts, and to return to the Lord, just as they are commanded to love God

* Owen on the Holy Spirit.

with all their heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and their neighbour as themselves. Now, we are taught that the law was added that the offence might abound. Its promulgation did not imply that fallen man had "*powers* or *capabilities*" to obey it; it was intended to stop every mouth, and to bring in the whole world guilty before God. It is a perfect standard, by which men are taught to measure themselves, that they may see their guilt and alienation from God. In like manner, the commandment to repent—to believe, and to be reconciled to God, is given for the purpose of at once discovering the lost and ruined condition of fallen man, together with his naturally irreconcilable alienation from God, and of making known the exceeding riches of the love of God towards his chosen people—to whom it is given to believe on Christ, Phil. i. 29.

The gospel is the manifestation of the Divine character; not only of his power and wisdom, but of his justice and mercy. These appear to be incompatible. God may punish sin, but how shall he be just in forgiving it? This is a question which no created understanding could have answered, and it is only by the gospel that the difficulty is removed. The gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness, Rom. i. 16. Like the worlds, he has created it by his Son, Isa. xlv. 8; Heb. i. 2. He saves to the uttermost all who come to him through Christ, while he by no means clears the guilty. His mercy endureth for ever, while the truth of his denunciation is confirmed, that the soul which sinneth it shall die. The gospel is hid from very many who profess the faith of Jesus; they read that God is love, but do not perceive

that, while God is good to all, while he makes his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, while he is the preserver of all men, his love is exclusively fixed upon his chosen people, for whose sake he sent his Son into the world, that they might live through him, 1 John iv. 8—10. Sentence against an evil world is not executed speedily; God endures, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory, Rom. ix. 22, 23. By representing all mankind as the objects of this love and mercy, his glory is completely obscured; for, unless we reject the scriptures, we must admit that his people in every age have been a very small remnant, so that God's love and mercy issue in the destruction of the greater part of their objects. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children," Psal. ciii. 17. In celebrating the mercy of God, the psalmist not only dwells upon his kindness to his chosen people, but upon his judgments on their enemies. "To him which divided the Red sea into parts; for his mercy endureth for ever: And made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for his mercy endureth for ever: But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; for his mercy endureth for ever. To him which smote great kings; for his mercy endureth for ever: And slew famous kings; for his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon king of the Amorites; for his mercy endureth for ever: And Og the king of Bashan; for his mercy endureth for ever." Psal. cxxxvi. 13, 14,

15, 17, 18, 19, 20. "Of thy *mercy*," says the psalmist, "cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I am thy servant," Psal. cxliii. 12; and again he prays, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness," Psal. li. 14. Thus we see that in praying for the destruction of his enemies, he invokes God's *mercy*, while he determines to celebrate his *righteousness* for the pardon of his own transgressions. So fully does the gospel harmonise all the Divine attributes, that they are here used interchangeably; an act of justice is ascribed to mercy, and an act of mercy magnifies justice.

The distinction between God's people and the rest of the world is uniformly maintained. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee," Isa. lx. 1, 2. The angels sinned, and God showed them no mercy, but this does not prevent his being LOVE, nor will the glory of this attribute be obscured, but, on the contrary, be illustrated by the wicked being turned into hell, while Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

Every man is justly condemned for the violation of the law, which is holy, just, and good; his disobedience proves that he is lost, and alienated from God. The condemnation of all who hear, and reject the gospel, will be aggravated by their refusal to be reconciled to God. This places their hatred of God in the strongest light. But there is no condemna-

tion to those who have learned what flesh and blood cannot reveal; who, in other words, have been the subjects of "supernatural agency," and who, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, have fled to Christ for refuge. Through eternity they shall sing, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

Men are commanded to believe in the Son of God, and his people, *through the Spirit*, obey the commandment, 1 Pet. i. 22. It is really their own act; it is not the Holy Spirit that believes, but the sinner who is made willing in the day of his power; for the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the mind. Thus they who were sometime darkness are made light in the Lord. The sophistry of the Circular consists in not distinguishing the means which *God employs* in bringing his people to his eternal kingdom of glory, from the natural capabilities of fallen man.

Having noticed the faculties with which man is endowed, which render him capable of love and desire, fear and alarm, the Circular proceeds: "He is capable of enlightenment, *qualified* to decide on the merits of things that differ, open to the force of reasoning, conviction, and persuasion, and susceptive of love and desire, fear and alarm. But, chiefly, the means in the use of them which mankind are both urged and empowered to make, are institutionally and eminently connected with the influence and promise of the Holy Spirit. You well know, beloved, that the Gospel itself is the ministry of the Spirit. So to speak, it is written with the Spirit of the living God. One of its provisions is, 'I will put my laws into their

minds, and write them in their hearts.' It should then seem that the Spirit is *embodied in the means themselves*, somewhat as, in the animal economy, the principle of life is blended with the different forms of matter. And the Holy Spirit is positively guaranteed to that exercise of the given means, to which men are called, and of which they are capable: yea, we presume, that the impartation and reception of his grace and *aids* never fail nor *stagnate* where the *means* are with earnestness and eagerness pursued." P. 18.

When God fulfils his promise, "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts," is not this *supernatural agency?* The promise is limited to the children of the new covenant. The law was given to Israel, after the flesh, written upon tables of stone; but the law is written on the fleshy tables of the heart of the true Israel, not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: we again ask, Is not this supernatural agency?

Well may the writers of the Circular falter and say, "it should then *seem* that the Spirit is embodied in the means themselves." If all who heard the Gospel received the love of the truth, or if any received it without "supernatural agency," this conclusion would be more plausible; but since the effects of the gospel, wherever it is preached, afford such a striking comment upon our Lord's words, "Many are called, but few chosen," and since the scriptures repeatedly declare that faith is the gift of God, there is not the most remote appearance of the Spirit being embodied in the means. The authors of the Circular tell us, that those who perish do not use

the means of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; to which we reply, that, according to the Word of God, no man ever did repent or believe, excepting by the same supernatural agency by which Christ was raised from the dead. Those only repent and believe who are baptised with the Holy Ghost; who, by one Spirit, are baptised into one body, which is the distinguishing privilege of all Christ's disciples, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

We are told, "it should then seem that the Spirit is *embodied in the means themselves*, somewhat as, in the animal economy, the principle of life is blended with the different forms of matter." The principle of life is perfectly distinct from the different forms of matter. The form of the human body, and of its several parts, remain the same when the principle of life is extinct. In the account of man's creation, we are guarded against supposing that the principle of life is blended with the forms of matter. God made Adam of the dust; he gave him what form he saw meet, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul.

Previously to receiving life, Adam's body possessed all the organs by which the functions of life are performed, but still it was dead. So, while his offspring possess those rational faculties which, when quickened by the Holy Spirit, fit them for the service and enjoyment of God they are naturally dead, alienated from the life of God, and incapable of pleasing him, Rom. viii. 8. "In life natural," says Dr Owen, "the soul is the quickening principle, and the body is the principle quickened. When the

soul departs, it leaves the body with all its own natural properties, but utterly deprived of those which it had by virtue of its union with the soul. So in life spiritual, the soul is not, in and by its essential properties, the quickening principle of it, but the principle which is quickened. When the quickening principle of spiritual life departs, it leaves the soul with all its natural properties entire, as to their essence, though morally corrupted. But of all the power and abilities which it had, by virtue of its union with the quickening principle of spiritual life, it is deprived. And to deny such a quickening principle of spiritual life, superadded unto us by the grace of Christ, distinct and separate from the natural faculties of the soul, is, upon the matter, to renounce the whole Gospel." *

Adam is contrasted with the Second Adam, who, having life in himself, is a quickening Spirit, and communicates life to all his people, who, although naturally alive, are spiritually dead, Eph. ii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 6. The Spirit which is given to Christ without measure,—like the precious oil poured on the head of Aaron, and which went down to the skirts of his garments,—is given to all his people in the day of regeneration, and by this "supernatural agency" they are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Those who are not partakers of this Spirit are none of his, Rom. viii. 9.

We are told, that "the Holy Spirit is positively guaranteed to that exercise of the given means to which men are called, and of which

* Owen on the Spirit.

they are capable,"—p. 18. And what are those means? According to the Circular, repentance, faith, heavenly mindedness, walking in the Spirit, &c. &c. Now, we should suppose, that we must possess the Spirit before we can walk in the Spirit; but if we are capable of all these, call them means, or by any other name, we do not see what benefit we are to receive from the guarantee of the Spirit, in which we are already walking and maintaining "a determined conflict with sin, Satan, and the world, and an unshaken perseverance in the faith, profession, and practice of Christianity. Those who "possess and use" the specified "means and capabilities to ensure a personal participation in its (the great salvation) blessings," are fathers in Christ; they have drank largely into his Spirit, and already participate in the blessings of the great salvation.

CHAPTER VII.

Vision of the dry bones ;—confutes the doctrine of the Circular ;—Luke xi. 5—13 ;—must possess life before we use food or medicine ;—guilt of neglecting the great salvation ;—the means not inadequate ;—human guilt not expiated on the cross, or all would have been saved ;—denial of the substitution of Christ ;—Zaleucus ;—evil of such illustrations ;—view of redemption as given in scripture ;—the consummation of God's eternal purpose.

A VERY unsuccessful attempt is made to illustrate the doctrine taught in the Circular, by Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones.

"To secure," say the writers, "further elucidation and evidence on this momentous question, let the mind's eye take a survey of an open valley, full of bones and very dry, presented to the contemplation of an ancient prophet. The inquiry, 'Can these bones live?' appears to anticipate the *stale* objection of *incapability*, which in Ezekiel's own imagination might perhaps arise; but which certainly since his days, has much prevailed and *perniciously* operated. To obviate such an objection, the servant of God is set to work at the *machinery of means*. He is commanded to preach to the bones, directly and peremptorily *summoning* them to hear the word of the Lord. Immediately conjoined with this movement, Jehovah promises life with all its attendant acquisitions; and a state of shaking and incipient animation quickly succeeds, as if the *means themselves partially inhered, and put forth a vital energy*. And still more to demonstrate their efficacy in the proper use of them, he

is ordered to advance in his work, and prophesy to the four winds, exclaiming, 'Thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' He did as he was required; he applied the instituted means, and the effect was propitious. 'So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came unto them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army:' an army consisting of 'the whole house of Israel.'"—Pp. 18, 19.

Could any thing short of Almighty power have caused the bones to live? It is the peculiar characteristic of God that he quickeneth the dead. What influence could any means whatever have produced upon the bones without "supernatural agency bordering on the miraculous, if not emphatically so?" The prophet was asked, "Can these bones live?" He replied, "O Lord God, thou knowest." The question was put by one with whom nothing was impossible. "To obviate such an objection," (the stale objection of incapability,) says the Circular, "the servant of God is set to work at the machinery of means." And what is this to the purpose? To countenance the doctrine taught in the Circular, the bones ought to have been set to work at that machinery. If the writers find any who object to believers using means to awaken their fellow-men to the awful concerns of eternity, and to lead their attention to the only way of salvation, they may with propriety adduce this passage of the word of God.

There cannot be a more beautiful illustration of the effect of the preaching of the gospel, than the vision of the dry bones. It shows that, in regard to

its success, "all things are of God." The prophet's voice was too feeble to awaken the dead without supernatural agency; it could no more have produced any effect upon the bones, than it could have called the planets from their spheres. But the prophet was acting under the Divine authority, and therefore the word was with power; just as the word of Joshua stopped the course of the sun and moon under the same authority, Josh. x. 12. In both cases God appointed the means, but *in themselves* they were utterly inadequate to the attainment of the end. They possessed no inherent efficacy, and their effect depended entirely on "supernatural agency."

Now, he who commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones, and Joshua to speak to the sun and moon, commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature; and, while he has given us no reason to expect that all who hear it shall be saved, he hath said, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," Isa. lv. 10, 11.

By Divine appointment, "faith cometh by hearing," and the word of God is pledged for the success of the gospel. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live," John v. 25. The resurrection of Lazarus, who, in his grave, heard the voice of Christ, was not more truly the result of supernatural agency than the con-

version of sinners through the preaching of the gospel. There is not in the narrative of Ezekiel's vision the slightest appearance, "as if the means themselves partially inhered and put forth a vital energy." What the writers mean to convey by the means partially inhering, we shall not attempt to explain; but, so far from countenancing the supposition, that anything resembling a vital energy was inherent in the means, the passage under consideration establishes the very opposite conclusion.

The means by which God was pleased to work, was Ezekiel's prophesying. To have addressed the bones, without a special injunction, would have been the act of a madman, and considering the state of fallen man, notwithstanding all the noble faculties which he possesses, such as intellect, conscience, affections, &c. it would be perfectly hopeless to call upon him to turn to God, had not the Lord commanded it, and promised to make the preaching of the gospel effectual for the salvation of a multitude which no man shall be able to number. The weakness of the means which God has been pleased to employ for this purpose, was intended to secure to himself the glory of its accomplishment: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," 2 Cor. iv. 7. Believers are described as being born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. At other times, they are said to be born of the Word, 1 Pet. i. 23; because the Spirit is the agent, and the Word the instrument which he employs. Hence it is written, "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," James i. 18.

To the question, "Does not this, (the success of

Ezekiel's prophesying to the dry bones) on the absorbing topic of means, betoken *intrinsic and collaterial efficacy ?*" p. 19, we answer, No ; it betokens the very reverse. The vision refers to the restoration of Israel, but may also be applied to the conversion of the true Israel by the preaching of the gospel. It is preached by the Lord's commandment, and to guard the apostles against trusting in the means which they were commissioned to employ, he promised to be with them always, even to the end of the world, and this secures the success of the gospel. Many, indeed, reject the counsel of God against themselves, but his word does not return to him void.

The writers of the Circular inquire, "Does it not indicate, that if they (the means) are used as God ordains, and men *are* able, the result is as infallible, as the atonement is all-sufficient ?"—P. 19. What result? The gospel accomplishes that which God pleaseth, and prospers in the thing to which he has sent it. But it never was, and we have every reason to believe, it never will be universally successful ; yet it must always redound to the Divine glory. God is glorified in the preaching of the gospel, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. The apostle thanked God, who always caused him to triumph, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge by him in every place ; but this stands in immediate connexion with the declaration : "that he was unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish." If, by the result being "infallible," is meant uniform success, neither the apostle's experience nor our own, affords the slightest ground for such an expectation. No doubt, however, if, with the authors of the Circular,

we include in the means, repentance, faith, heavenly mindedness, walking in the Spirit, &c. the result is infallible; but the assertion, that these means and capabilities are accessible to all that are privileged with the gospel, without supernatural agency, we have no hesitation in denouncing as another gospel a perversion of the gospel of Christ.

Again, we are asked, "Does it not prove that the gospel scheme of human recovery, is not that *maimed* thing which it is too generally represented to be?"—P. 19. By that "maimed thing," the writers mean the denial of the inherent efficacy of the means apart from the supernatural power of the Spirit. According to them, this would render the method of recovery imperfect, and place the hearers of the gospel in the condition of a "maimed person, who, instead of two limbs requisite for support and motion, has only one."—P. 16. According to the word of God, the hearers of the gospel have not so much as one limb to support them. They are without strength, utterly lost and helpless. This may be foolishness to the writers of the Circular, but it is the uniform doctrine of the word of God.

Once more, it is asked, "Does it not evince that the means of *renovation and sanctification* are as *proximate* and *efficient* as are those of *pardon* and *justification?*"—P. 19. Renovation and sanctification are inseparably connected with pardon and justification, so that we have no objections to the means being "as proximate and efficient" for the one as for the other.

The writers next quote Luke xi. 5—13, and proceed:—"Beloved, we would put the question to you,

Are not *all* men bound in duty 'to seek, to ask, and to knock," as by Christ enjoined? DOUBTLESS. And are not all *capable* of doing so? CERTAINLY. But if they are competent, they may avail themselves of the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the communication of that ineffable boon is solemnly *pledged* to such as request it. The vouchsafement is not restricted to this or that, but is promised to *any* that may petition it. And does not this clearly indicate and fully demonstrate the *adequacy of the* MEANS *to effect our actual recovery?*"—P. 20.

We answer, No man cometh to the Father but by Christ; God is to all, excepting those who are in Christ, the unknown God. The worship of every unbeliever is idolatry; he worships he knows not what; there is no access to the Father but through Christ, by one Spirit, Eph. ii. 18. Let none, then, but those who ask in faith, think that they shall obtain any thing of the Lord; in order to pray, we must draw near through the rent vail of the Redeemer's flesh; fallen man is as much excluded from *immediate* access to God as the fallen angels. Christ is the way, and those only come to Christ who have heard and learned of the Father, John vi. 45. The world (that is, unbelievers) cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, John xiv. 16, 17; this knowledge is peculiar to the disciples of Christ, in whom he dwells as the Spirit of adoption, and, consequently, as the spirit of grace and supplication.

It is justly stated in the Circular, that the encouragement to prayer quoted from the evangelist was given by the Lord to "his disciples." It is fraught with encouragement to believers in every

age, but it affords no evidence, or the shadow of an argument, in proof of the efficacy of the means, without supernatural agency, to effect the actual recovery of those who have rebelled against God. "The weapons of our warfare," says the apostle, are mighty, *through God*, to the pulling down of strongholds." The Gospel accomplishes that which God pleaseth, but both scripture and experience prove that it is not his pleasure to save all who hear the Gospel. If the authors of the Circular reply, it is owing to men's hatred of the light that all the hearers of the Gospel are not saved, we fully agree with them; and this hatred of the light is the consequence of their being under the curse,—of their being by nature the children of wrath, dead in sins,—and all, but those who were redeemed from the curse by the blood-shedding of Jesus, persist in this hatred, and die in their sins, notwithstanding the freeness of the invitations of the Gospel. It is a matter of fact, which was foretold in the Word of God, and has been demonstrated by the experience of eighteen hundred years, that comparatively few believe the report, and we affirm, without fear of contradiction by any man whose understanding has been opened to understand the scriptures, that when any believe, it is owing to supernatural agency.

We are told, "As food is adapted to the purpose of our daily subsistence, and medicine (when diseased) to the restoration of health, so the EXTERNAL means are suited to the purposes of *spiritual* subsistence and *saving* health. And as the former, in the order of nature and Providence, are to all men accessible, so the latter, in the arrangements of Divine grace, are alike

feasible. But if any choose to die of hunger, or of disease, rather than be at the trouble of procuring food, or physic, when both are within their reach, they cannot, with any semblance of truth, say, '*Dire fate has appointed this.*' No more can the impenitent and prayerless sinner complain of his hard destiny, when he perishes in the neglect of the great salvation. *All the blame lies at his own door.* The King and his throne are guiltless."—P. 20.

No doubt, the gospel is adapted to the purpose of spiritual subsistence and saving health ; it sets before us the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall never die. But, in order to make use either of food or medicine, a man must be possessed of life, and, as fallen man is spiritually dead,—slain by the word of God's mouth, "On the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die,"—he never will, he never can, receive the food or medicine without supernatural agency. We have already expressed our disapprobation of classing walking in the Spirit, heavenly mindedness, &c. under the head of means, and are happy in the appearance of any symptom of the writers of the Circular seeming disposed to quit this untenable ground, by employing the epithet *external* means, which surely cannot apply to "the specified means of holy meditation and heavenly-mindedness, walking in the Spirit," &c. but we must acknowledge our ignorance of the meaning of the external means, being, in the arrangements of Divine grace, "alike feasible."

Food and medicine are *not*, in the order of nature and Providence, accessible to all men, neither are the "external means of salvation" bestowed upon all men ; and the scripture teaches us, that where there

is no vision the people perish, and that as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law. In this we see the absolute sovereignty of God, as well as in his granting repentance unto life to some who enjoy the external means of salvation, while, by this privilege, the condemnation of others is aggravated, John iii. 19.

We are fully satisfied that the guilt of neglecting the great salvation lies with the sinner, and that whatever "hard speeches" men may now make about an "impassable bar thrown across the way," "the method of recovery being imperfect," "the Gospel scheme of human recovery being a *maimed* thing," God will, in the great day, be justified in his sayings, and overcome when he is judged.

Among other advantages which the writers anticipate from the adoption of their hypothesis, that instituted means are sufficient without supernatural agency, is the following:—"You will be in circumstances to tell him, (the objector) your means of *sanctification* are as accessible, effective, and infallible, as your means of *pardon and justification.*"—P. 21. In this we fully agree with the doctrine of the Circular; pardon, justification, and sanctification, are, as we have already stated, inseparable. We also hold, that men's rejection of the Gospel proceeds from their loving darkness rather than light, and that this will form the ground of the condemnation of those who perish. We cannot add, with the Circular, "the ONLY ground;" for all mankind, with the exception of believers, are condemned already: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" hence they are dead in trespasses

and sins, and thus they remain, till quickened by the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit.

"But mark," says the Circular, "if our means of *restoring* the ruined creature, *man*, are inadequate to the end proposed, we so run as uncertainly, we so labour as one who beats the air. Our ministrations and other endeavours are *yea* and *nay*. We say, you *can* be saved, and you *cannot*. We say, *human guilt* has been *fully* expiated on the cross, but you are devoid of capabilities actually to interest you in the benefits of that expiation, or the means you possess are not sufficient to effect your personal recovery. Our movements and opinions are therefore at issue. The former are *incontrovertibly* evangelical and sound; and such being the case, the latter must be inaccurate and imperfect, and the sooner they are *abjured* the better. For, laying them aside, and adopting the view of things suggested, our exertions and theory will accord. The bed will not be *shorter* than that a man may stretch himself on it; and the covering *narrower* than he can wrap himself in it. It will cease to be that Procrustean bed, which, though, in the case before us was not intended, yet is necessarily calculated to inflict torture and misery."—Pp. 22, 23.

No one maintains that our means are inadequate to the end proposed, but this we say by the word of the Lord, that it never was the Divine purpose that all mankind should be saved. This we have already proved by the express declaration of God when the coming of the Saviour was first announced; by his dealings with mankind for four thousand years afterwards; by the greater part of the human race never to this day having heard of the only Saviour, and by

few of those who do hear, receiving the love of the truth. Still, we do not run as uncertainly, we do not labour as one who beats the air; our ministrations are not yea and nay. We proclaim to all, to whom we have access, the forgiveness of sins through Christ, and the assurance of eternal life to those who believe, and, we add, if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

If we had been consulted respecting the way of salvation, no doubt it would have borne a very different aspect; but we are the less moved by the lamentable consequences, which, according to the Circular, are connected, with holding that men are naturally devoid of capabilities, actually to interest themselves in the benefits of Christ's expiation; when we read in the word of God, that he has destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent, by saving those who believe by the *foolishness* of preaching.

With regard to the assertion, that human guilt has been fully expiated upon the cross, we shall only observe, that if so, it will not again be charged upon any of the human race. If the guilt of mankind is expiated, their debt is discharged; they are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and since they are not under the law, but under grace, sin shall not have dominion over them, Rom. vi. 14. But the writers of the Circular set aside the expiation of Christ altogether. They represent, apparently with studied ambiguity, "the death of Christ as a public satisfaction, designed to honour the demands of moral government, in providing for the relief of mankind indiscriminately;"—"a public transaction, intended

to avert a public calamity, by making amends to public justice, that ample means might be obtained for the honourable acquittal, even of every one who cordially believes in Jesus."—P. 14.

In what, we would ask, does the satisfaction consist? In what respect did it honour the demands of moral government? How could public justice possibly receive amends by the sufferings of an innocent person, however exalted? According to Paul's gospel, He who knew no sin was made sin for the children whom God had given him, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. He bore their sins in his own body upon the tree, in consequence of which, having died and risen with him, they are dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness. Their bond for ten thousand talents is cancelled. Christ nailed it to his cross. Col. ii. 14.; but in the Circular, the substitution of Christ for his people, is not only denied, but represented as "a mean and mercenary notion of a private pecuniary and arithmetical compensation." May we not then ask, Is not the full expiation of human guilt upon the cross as much surveying the death of Christ "under the mean and mercenary notion of a pecuniary and arithmetical compensation," as the scripture doctrine of its being an expiation of the transgression of God's people, Isaiah liii. 8. The difference lies in this, those who are guided by the word of God, maintain that the chastisement of God's people was laid upon Christ, and that by his stripes they are healed; the writers of the Circular affirm, that human guilt has been fully expiated on the cross, while the sacrifice does not secure the salvation of an individual, and

while, in point of fact, the greater part of mankind perish, for strait is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it, Matt. vii. 14.

We are told that ample means are "obtained for the honourable acquittal of every one who cordially believes in Jesus." Now, the far greater part of the world never heard of Jesus, and therefore cannot believe, Rom. x. 14; consequently the atonement does not provide for "the relief of mankind indiscriminately;" and, in regard to those who are favoured with the gospel, the scripture is express in declaring that their faith is the gift of God; so that, after all, the writers of the Circular, to be consistent, must hold that by the atonement ample means are obtained for the acquittal of those whom God makes to differ from others, by bestowing upon them precious faith. This is merely a circuitous method of stating the scripture doctrine which so offends them, that God "purchased the Church with his own blood."

The Circular speaks of the death of Christ as an expiation of human guilt, but, according to their view, it is, in fact, a contrivance to save appearances, of which the favourite illustration is the conduct of Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, who, having promulgated a law, of which his son was the first violator, that the adulterer should lose his eyes, submitted to the loss of one of his own eyes, in order to save one of the eyes of his son. In this transaction there was neither truth nor justice. The law was not executed, the guilty escaped with half the threatened punishment, while the innocent suffered; and shall this

"MAIMED THING" be employed as an illustration of "the manifold wisdom of God," into which "the angels desire to look?

The plan of salvation stands alone in the universe, and every attempt to illustrate it by what takes place among men, tends only to misrepresent and degrade it. The sparks which we kindle bear a resemblance to the sun; however feeble, still they emit light: but there is nothing among men similar, or in the remotest degree approaching to the manifestation of the Son of God, that he might destroy the works of the devil. It is a new thing in the earth. Christ's name and work are both wonderful. "It is higher than heaven, what can we know? deeper than hell, what can we understand?" Let us thankfully receive the revelation given us in the word of God, but let us not intrude into things which we have not seen, or attempt, by our contemptible illustrations, to unveil the mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ. To this subject the inspired proverb is peculiarly applicable: "The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools," Prov. xxvi. 7.

According to the word of God, HE in whom life dwelt, as in its fountain, took part with the children whom the Father had given him in flesh and blood, that, by becoming their near kinsman, he might have the right of redemption. They had in their first father, in whom they were created, and whose blood flowed in their veins, trampled upon God's most holy law, and thus incurred its most righteous curse; but, in the sufferings and death of Christ, they have received of the Lord's hand double for all their sins.

In their nature, as their covenant Head and Surety, he bore the curse which no creature could have sustained; and, in virtue of his Divine power, having voluntarily laid down his life and taken it again, in obedience to the commandment of his Father,—whose servant he had become for the ransom of his people,—he is now made most blessed for ever. As God, he was equally incapable of exaltation or humiliation; but having, as the Son of Man, humbled himself unto death, that he might restore what he took not away; having magnified the law and made it honourable, by answering all its demands and enduring all its penalty in behalf of his people; having exhibited to the universe the unsearchable riches of Divine wisdom, he is now exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and, as the Man of God's right hand, the Son of Man whom he hath made strong for himself, has received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him. For their sakes he sanctified himself, that they might be sanctified through the truth. They were all predestinated to be conformed to the image of the only-begotten Son, who is not ashamed to call them brethren. In their successive generations, they are called and justified; by one Spirit they are baptised into one body; they are the temple of the Holy Ghost, by whom their mortal flesh shall be quickened, and they shall all be glorified in the day when the heavens and the earth shall flee away from *his* face; to whom, as the Son of Man, all judgment is committed.

Such will be the consummation of God's eternal purpose; such will be the result of His manifold wisdom. Eternity will not be too long for its development. The subject provided for the admiring contemplation of saints and angels is unbounded; it is the love of Christ to his Church, which passeth knowledge.

CONCLUSION.

Similarity and difference between Mr Hinton and the Circular;—inconsistency of the writers of the Circular.

In the Circular of the Midland Association, we see the fruits of Mr Hinton's system. As might have been anticipated, it carries matters farther than he does, but there is a strong family likeness. Both, we apprehend, take a false view of the atonement, or rather, as we have said, set it aside, considering it merely as a public exhibition of God's disapprobation of sin, by the sufferings of an innocent person. We do not wish to misrepresent Mr Hinton, and shall be happy to find that in this we are mistaken, but at present we entertain no doubt that his views of the atonement correspond with those of the writers of the Circular. In his Work upon the Spirit, he does not enter upon the subject, observing, that his object is to treat not of the work of Christ, but of the work of the Spirit; but they are so closely blended that it is impossible to treat properly of the one without connecting it with the other. The Spirit does not speak of himself, but glorifies Christ by receiving of his, and showing it to his people; John xvi. 13, 14.

Should Mr Hinton continue to hold the doctrine of personal election, (which the writers of the Circular do not, or, if they do, are very inconsistent) and the absolute necessity of the power of the Holy Spirit to make a sinner wise unto salvation, he will perhaps see in the doctrine of the Circular that his speculations have

opened a flood-gate of error; and although he may not himself be carried farther down the stream, he may rest assured, that the notion of our not being naturally devoid of capabilities actually to interest ourselves in the benefits of Christ's expiation, is far too congenial to the pride of fallen man not to be eagerly embraced by many who profess the faith of Jesus; and few of them will be induced to halt at this stage of the journey.

It has been justly observed, that what is true is not always probable. Had any one,—in order to libel the Ministers and Messengers of the several Baptist Churches of the Midland Association,—represented them as holding the gross Pelagianism upon which we have animadverted, while they introduced their Letter with the profession of faith which has long been adhered to by those who are called Particular Baptists, it would have been reprobated as ridiculous and incredible. Yet true it is and of verity, that the Circular which we have been considering, is thus introduced: "Circular Letter.—The Ministers and Messengers of the several Baptist Churches of the Midland Association, assembled at Willenhall, May 22 & 23, 1839, maintaining the Independence of their respective Churches,—and believing the Important Doctrines of Three Equal Persons in the Godhead,—Eternal and Personal Election,—Original Sin,—Particular Redemption,—Free Justification by the Righteousness of Christ imputed,—Efficacious grace in Regeneration,—the Final Persever-

ance of the Saints,—the Resurrection of the Dead,—the General Judgment at the Last Day,—and the Life Everlasting; to the several Societies they represent, or from which they have received Letters."

Assuredly the writers of the Circular cannot say with the apostle, "Our word toward you was not yea and nay."

END.

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